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PHONOGRAPH

MONTHLY REVIEW

FEBRUARY 1931

Bach Without Wig

Robert Donaldson Darrell

Recording Pianists

Harry L. Anderson

Special Reviews of works by

Mozart

Kenneth B. Murdock

Beethoven

Peter Hugh Reed

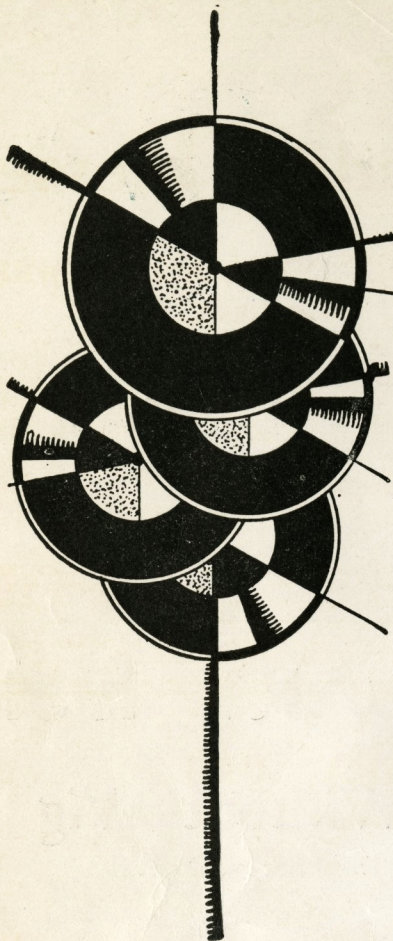
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Reviews of American and Foreign Releases



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Editorial

THE 1931 edition of the "Encyclopedia of the World's Best Recorded Music" put out by The Gramophone Shop is important, not so much as evidence of the activity of a large record dealer, (although this is quite in line with the achievements of the leading houses—the New York Band Instrument Company with its cleverly edited "Guide" invaluable to every record buyer, and the H. Royer Smith Company with its attractive publication *Disques*), but as a landmark of actual phonographic accomplishment. If there are still ignoramuses who dwell in the Stygian night of belief in the passing of the phonograph and records, this encyclopedia is not only irrefutable affirmation that the phonograph's death "has been greatly exaggerated," but superb testimony in specifically documentary form that electrical recording has contributed perhaps the most notable advance in music appreciation in the twentieth century. Indeed it is not fantastic to compare the development of recording with that of the printing press. The potential musical public has been expanded infinitely beyond the narrow and uncomfortable confines of the concert hall. Musical literacy and culture are now available to the inhabitant of the musically arid provinces no less than to those who live in musical centers.

Every thorough going believer in phonography keeps hammering away at such points as these, not merely whistling to keep his courage up, but to get the facts across to those who can see only the dark side of the shield,—the drop in the sale of popular records and the failure of many erstwhile prosperous phonograph dealers. The popular music slump has been the subject of frequent discussion in these pages and Mr. David L. Piper's summing up ("Records on the Air," June issue) remains the last word on the subject. As long as radio stations are permitted to "plug" popular record hits scores of times a day over the air, the public for popular music cannot be expected to desert its radios and rush down town to purchase the disc itself. The radio today is a melancholy spectacle for anyone who believes in the potential cultural values of mechanical means for the dissemination of music. It has degenerated to the level of the yellowest newspaper tabloid and being given all the rope it wants, it is hanging itself as fast as it can.

Fortunately for more serious music, the normal person of intelligence takes the rare best that broadcasts can give—and that best is so good that the radio cannot be damned outright for the sins it commits along with its virtues—and then turns the knob of his combination instrument to record reproduction and enjoys the best in music unadulterated by the worst. An official

of the Brunswick company, whose words are reprinted elsewhere in this issue, has coined a splendid term for the supreme advantage of the recorded musical masterpiece. It is *selective music*. In the words of another slogan, one can have what one wants to hear whenever one wants to hear it, and it will be heard in the most musically performances of the world's finest artists.

Consequently the gulf becomes wider and wider between the genuine and the shoddy in music. The record dealers who have failed are those who did not heed the handwriting on the wall and who ignored the swelling tide of celebrity and album set releases. Now their only foothold, the tunes of the minute, is slipping under their feet before an uncontrolled flood of broadcast plugging. More and more the sale of records is going to be concentrated in a few outstanding dealers, those who chose their salespersons and stock with an eye to the patronage of those who are interested in "selective music." Hundreds of our readers write us that they have come or they are about to come to buying records by mail from the large dealers, rather than trying to obtain the better records from local dealers who are not only totally unfamiliar with music itself, but equally ignorant of the great works issued by the very companies they are supposed to represent.

It is a time of stress and shock in the music trade. Even we who have pinned our future on the cause of the best music suffer temporarily with the rest. The P. M. R. has to retrench as so many other magazines are retrenching—the temporary absence from our advertising pages of one of the large manufacturers puts a tremendous handicap on the progress we are striving so earnestly to make. But such set-backs are only momentary; there is no question of loss of faith in the market for the best in music, (either on our part or that of the manufacturer in question), for there will always be a public for the best, recording companies to cater to it, and a journal to offer encouragement and constructive criticism. With the rapidly accelerating rise in general business conditions buying powers will return, and "selective music," which has suffered far less than any other product of the music trades, will profit first and most. Meanwhile, those who would help the cause to attain even greater momentum can do so by buying and by encouraging the sale of the best recordings, and by helping the magazine reach others who are unsatisfied by concerts and dissatisfied by the musical fare offered by the radio, and who needs must turn to the phonograph for the full nourishment of one of the most profound and inherent human cravings—that for truly great music.

Bach Without Wig

The Well-Tempered Clavier: Music and Recordings

By ROBERT DONALDSON DARRELL

THE periwigged pictures we are accustomed to see and the condescending references to "Old Bach" that have been in vogue since Karl Philip Emanuel and his brothers first relegated their father to the status of old hat have combined to form a curious misconception of Bach's work in the minds of even the musically literate. Bach is revered today, but more often in awe than in love. Like Queequeg's little idol in *Moby Dick*, the god is paid elaborate obeisance and then unceremoniously put in storage to await the next rite. Bach's works are seldom considered to be compositions by Bach; they *are* Bach. Although they may be nearly half a century apart in date of composition, they are one and all conveniently classified "Bach,"—and they are all superimposed with the mental picture of the elderly *Kapellmeister* we are only too familiar with.

Such deification of an artist gratifies us in that we are proud of our wisdom in recognizing and honoring a genius among us. Yet we devitalize as we canonize. It is fortunate that Bach's works are not taught in the public schools of today, or we should soon find him buried as deeply under barnacles of tradition and insensible apperception as those of Shakespeare.

In the nineteenth century the task of the discerning musician was to publish Bach's greatness, but Schumann and the others perhaps did their work too well; today no one questions Bach's luminous place in the musical firmament, but he is threatened by a more serious fate than that of inadequate honor. Today we are faced with the problem of renewing our intimate contact with Bach, of restoring spontaneity and freshness both to the playing and the hearing of his works. He must be re-experienced with something of the excitement and glee with which his pupils spent weary hours copying and propagating the manuscript of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, or the thrill of exploration with which Schumann, Mendelssohn, Wesley and others brushed off the dust of a century from the manuscripts of the cantatas and masses, and made them sound again.

Such earnest and joyous devotion to Bach is not to be confused with the solemn veneration with which he is too often performed today. A year or two ago I heard Bach's final testament—the monumental *Art of Fugue*—in a chamber or-



Myra Hess

chestral transcription. The audience assembled and listened in funereal dignity. Shocked and indignant glances were the lot of those who so much as followed the pages of the score or whose countenances evidenced the keen pleasure with which the music filled them. And at the end, where that matchless and titanic final fugue breaks off—a masterpiece perfect even in its incompleteness—the sudden silence was not allowed to form the cadence that the dropped pen and the stiffened muscles of the composer had decreed. The hushed and incongruous tones of the organ broke in with the chorale written on Bach's death bed—as silly and sentimental a gesture as miscomprehending idolization could possibly conceive.

Our phonograph has so far been admirably free from such blind lip-service to Bach. Varied as are the personalities and the interpretations of his recorded works, they are all healthily and abundantly alive. Some have been accused of an excess of athleticism, as if any musician of today could even hope to match Bach's superb vigor and gusto. Dr. Stokowski set the pace with his orchestral transcriptions and the others have

shared his zestfulness. Confining ourselves to the *Well-Tempered Clavier* alone, the first discs that come to mind—and that form the finest possible introduction to the prelude and fugue recordings—are Myra Hess' little Columbia record of the third prelude and fugue (C sharp major), and Harold Samuel's Victor coupling of the first two (C major and C Minor). Samuel labors under the handicap of a reputation as a Bach scholar and authority, but if those terms involve formalized readings and juiceless execution, then they are atrociously misapplied, for his playing is simple, unaffected, and vibrant (here as in the English suite and his other Bach recordings). Myra Hess brings even greater exuberance to the third prelude and fugue; there is no laughter-less veneration here, but a frank and hearty rejoicing in the verdant unfolding of the gaily dance-like subject.

But a word on the music itself is in place before a discussion of the recordings. I imagine that most of my readers have a workable idea of the system of tuning known as equal temperament and which permits the use of keys badly out of tune in the old pure scale or natural system of intonation. Before the introduction of the new system, a few basic keys (those with not more than three or four sharps and flats) were usable, but modulatory resources were exceedingly limited. The amazing purity of the natural scales (almost unknown to our ears today) was sacrificed to the common good, and the aristocracy of keys gave way to a tonal democracy, distributing the errors of tuning equally among all keys so that all might assume equal importance. The old perfection of a few keys was lost (and there are still many who long for a revival of its exquisite glories), but an infinitely varied system of key relationships was gained, without which modern music and keyed instruments as we know them today would have been unthinkable.

Bach is sometimes given credit for the invention of the new system, but it is more likely that he was only its first important proponent. At any rate its general acceptance was due largely to his sponsorship. In pushing its claims he realized that definite examples must be provided to demonstrate the musical potentiality of the new system. What could be more striking proof than a series of pieces in each of the twenty-four keys—many of which would now be utilized for the first time in serious composition? Even so prodigal a productive nature as his did not overlook the convenience of embodying some material already in manuscript. He picked out a number of fugues and preludes, or little pieces on the order of inventions or capriccios that might serve as preludes, and reworked them. The prelude in E minor, No. 10, for example, had been originally composed for the instruction book for his sons (*Clavierbüchlein*). Now the unelaborate exercise was made the basis of the left-hand part, serving as accompaniment to a new melody in

the soprano (an example which instead of justifying Gounod's tampering with the C major prelude emphasises the contrast between Bach's sense of fitness and Gounod's supreme tastelessness). New preludes and fugues were written in the newly available keys until the complete series of twenty-four was completed (in the year 1722). The book was not published for over fifty years, but its importance—or at least its attractiveness—was immediately recognized. Bach took pleasure in the collection himself and as a reward to hard-working pupils or in expansive humor would play it to his students. One Heinrich Gerber—blessed of the gods!—had the amazing good fortune to hear on three different occasions Bach play the entire twenty-four without interruption. What an inestimable document a phonographic recording of one of these concerts would have been! (A tantalizing thought, but one that drives home the historical worth of the phonograph's activities in recent years in recording even lesser composers—Grieg, Debussy, Strawinski, Bartok, and many others—in their own works.)

The circumstances of the composition of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* would be of value only to students if it were not for the light they cast on the music itself. It were written at a time of comparative ease in Bach's life. Naturally he was on his mettle to make the first exploitation of the new resources a brilliant one. Otherwise he was writing to please himself only and not to the order of a patron. His medium was the clavi-chord, which unlike the harpsichord had an almost infinite gradation of tone control, even subtler although within narrower limits than those of the modern piano. He delighted in setting a particular mood or technical problem for each piece and in working it out with his intellect and sensibility on the tightest stretch (and this was the Bach of thirty-six, it must always be remembered, not the aged Bach of the popular picturization). Truly an "athlete of the soul" (to use Mr. Blackmur's pregnant phrase) and in the full flush of a musical fecundity that has never been equalled.

Keeping these points in mind it is easy to set the qualities to be demanded of an ideal executant of the preludes and fugues: the sensitively synchronized digital fluency and mental clarity that alone can encompass the delicacy of dynamic and color tonal nuance which the music demands; the well poised and evenly developed mental capacity for re-weaving the melodic voices as richly and as warmly as Bach has spun them; the physical and spiritual health and vigor to stand up to Bach as athlete to athlete; the architectural sense to rebuild Bach's structures in the perfect proportions of his design; the analytical sense to penetrate the intricacies of the musico-mathematical problems Bach took such craftsman's joy in setting and solving; and finally, the sixth sense for distribution of stress and emphasis so that not only the main points are given faultless exposition, but the minor ones are given their pro-

portionate importance, and each piece is suffused with the feeling and expressiveness with which the composer so richly endowed it.

Few musicians could measure up to such idealistic standards, but those who have had the rare privilege of playing Bach's works for the phonograph have stretched every nerve to meet the loftiest demands. Of course they often fail, but even the failures are glorious; and the successes are far from infrequent. Stokowski, Hess, and Samuel have already been mentioned. The two pianists who have begun Columbia's work of recording the first book of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* in its entirety—Harriet Cohen and Evelyn Howard-Jones—are less highly bruited names than those of the others, but they similarly combine sound attainments with a spiritual vivacity, the poetical with the mathematical sense (no incongruity in music) that we ask in thoroughly adequate performance of the preludes and fugues. Miss Cohen has recorded the first nine (Columbia Masterworks Album 120) and Mr. Howard-Jones the next eight (Columbia Masterworks Album 147). The similarity in their technical and interpretative development is seasoned by the contrasts in their personalities. Both may lack something of the animation one seeks, and that one finds in Myra Hess, but the gracious womanliness of Miss Cohen's performances and the straightforward masculinity of Mr. Howard-Jones' are equally sympathetic to the music, each revealing in it qualities that the other (and others) lose. Learning various qualities from each gives one greater perspective, and rounds out the almost inconceivable endowment of the composer. There is no blunting of musicianly acuteness or blurring of poetical feeling to be found in going on from our experience of the first three preludes and fugues as played by Samuel and Hess, to Miss Cohen's performance of the great prelude and triple fugue in C sharp minor (No. 4) or the equally impressive and moving poetic prelude and fugue in E flat minor (No. 8); and to Mr. Howard-Jones' playing of the dashing two-voiced fugue in E minor (No. 10), the vernal fresh prelude and fugue in F sharp major (No. 13 — an idyll of peaceful blithesomeness with enchanting episodic figure that is one of the most haunting things in all music), and the poignantly introspective prelude and fugue in G minor (No. 16)—to single out only a few.

It is not necessary to know the technical names and analyses of these works and their parts to thrive on their food for the mind and soul. Technical knowledge, however, does further stimulate one's appetite and increase the nourishment received. J. Fuller Maitland's simple, intelligent notes on the pieces (in booklets accompanying the albums, or in more extended form in two volumes in the "Musical Pilgrim" series) are an admirable introduction to some of the technical aspects involved. But he is wise in emphasizing the fact that these aspects are but a few of the facets

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presented by the work as a whole. The music itself is to be heard and experienced, made a part of oneself—one of the most profound and joyous of "adventures of the soul."

It must be a small mentality that has the temerity to minimize the significance of a mechanical instrument and process that makes such an artistic adventure possible to thousands to whom it would be denied if they had to depend alone upon the opportunities of hearing the *Well-Tempered Clavier* adequately played in concert or by themselves. Phonography is again the *Open Sesame*, and the musicians, engineers, and manufacturers who have contributed to make it so have added mightily to their own stature in indicating at least a measure of that of Bach—the true Bach, divested of the wig of icy erudition and unapproachable sanctity. The forbidding mask that tradition and the scholars have set up to frighten the timid has been torn off, and Bach may be known by any one who possesses the sincere and burning desire to know him. And the only introduction is his music. Words can never convey its world of feeling. "It is stupid to attempt, in words, to suggest its meaning; but it is still more stupid to suppose that it has none." The music itself suffices unto itself and the music is available to all who will give ear to it.

A Survey of Recorded Pianists

By HARRY L. ANDERSON

THE matter of summarizing even such a comparatively limited field in the arts as recorded pianism is one that necessarily leaves room for differences of opinion. Therefore, no apology is offered for the exclusion or inclusion in this survey of certain names that may very well mean more or less to people of different experience. The same applies to any critical estimates, although these, I believe, conform in most cases to the large consensus. Finally, it may be mentioned that electrical recordings alone are considered, and of these, only those that have seemed outstanding or most characteristic of the artists.

To many collectors, the fascination of the phonograph lies not only in the recording of great music, but also in the preservation of different styles of performance and interpretation. The days of "execution" belong to the dim past of piano playing, but one of its exponents, the ninety-year-old Francis Planté, was recorded only two years ago (French Columbia). Age, later pianistic achievement, and overamplification have made the delicacy and polish of his youth less emphatic in recordings of his near contemporaries, Chopin, Schumann and Mendelssohn; nevertheless, for many his playing will still hold a peculiar charm of style. Vladimir de Pachmann, now eighty-one, belongs less to any definite period. Eccentric, talkative, a genius in the smaller Chopin when he wishes, he has enlivened piano playing of the last fifty years more than any other pianist. His first new H.M.V. records are uneven, with enough flashes of the divine to make them valuable. For Victor, however, there is a record of the E minor posthumous Nocturne, and two mazurkas that is one of the most beautiful of all piano discs. More of de Pachmann's indescribable charm should be on records; if the mood were in him he might still provide an unsurpassable version of the Chopin F Minor Concerto.

During the last two years of his life, Liszt had about him the most brilliant group of young pianists that has ever assembled around any teacher at one time. Ansorge, Sauer, Lamond, Rosenthal, Friedheim, Siloti, Reisenauer, Stavenhagen, D'Albert, Liebling, etc., were the inner circle of whom the first four have been electrically recorded. Of Ansorge, an intellectual, perhaps the coupling of a Mozart Andante and a Chopin-Liszt *Chant-Polonais* (Parlophone) reveals best his playing; already his recent death has emphasized the value of his recording. More brilliant, a master of filigree and polish, Emil von Sauer is still one of the greatest of European pianists. His own *Music Box* and Liszt's *Gnomenspiele* (Parlophone) might be singled out, and he has also been recorded less well by Pathé in Liszt, Chopin, and Mendelssohn. So far, no major work by him has been issued. Lamond and Beethoven are as firmly linked together as de Pachmann and Chopin, or Samuel and Bach. Whether or not one approves of his rubato, he, Schnabel, and D'Albert are that composer's most celebrated interpreters since von Bülow. Hence it is a fine thing to have his interpretative strength in such works as the Sonatas, Op. 110 in A Flat, Op. 31, No. 2, in D Minor. Of Liszt he has recorded brilliantly a number of unhackneyed original works and operatic transcriptions. The greatest active pupil of Liszt today, however, is Moriz Rosenthal, whose records should be more accessible to American buyers. One of the most beautiful of all Chopin records, two études and four preludes for Edison, is no longer available. His Debussy *Reflections on the Water* and Albeniz *Triana* (Parlophone) is unimportable; the same may apply to his latest records from Chopin. There remains a shimmering, miraculous transcription of *The Blue*



Vladimir de Pachmann

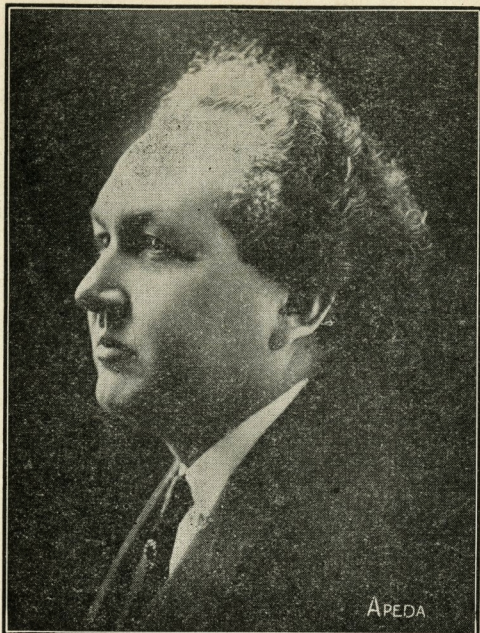
(from a caricature by Dr. Ricardo M. Aleman)

Danube and other Strauss Waltzes (Electrola) that every piano record collector should own. One may hope that his unequalled brilliancy in the Liszt E Flat Concerto, his poetry in the Chopin E Minor, and the power of his intellect in the later Beethoven, may be chosen for future recording.

Also of Liszt vintage is the Belgian, Arthur De Greef, who gives authentic and zestful versions of the Liszt *Hungarian Fantasia* (Victor), and the G Minor (H.M.V.) and A Minor (Victor) Concertos of his friends, Saint-Saëns and Grieg, as well as smaller works by the latter. A different tradition is continued by Fanny Davies, who has recorded with sound and beautiful artistry the Schumann Concerto and *Davidstündchen* (Columbia), and the *Kinderszenen* (English Columbia). Any more records by her of this composer or of Brahms, whom she championed in England, will be extremely valuable. Of the same generation is Max von Pauer, son and pupil of Ernst Pauer, who plays very beautifully in the Schubert "Trout" Quintet (Polydor).

Forty years have left the glamor of Paderewski unchanged, his greatness as an artist perhaps sublimated, but undiminished. With the years his conceptions have enlarged, sometimes transcending the realm of mere piano playing into a world of their own. Rather curiously, the record that conveys this most is the Schelling Nocturne; like Paderewski, it is in a domain apart above all others. The F Minor Ballade, B Flat Minor Sonata, and D Flat Nocturne, of Chopin, would equal, perhaps surpass it; among his records, that of Schumann's *Prophet Bird* approaches it. Of the greatest importance is the rest of his list—notably Debussy's *Reflections*, Chopin's E Minor Etude, a Schubert Impromptu; nevertheless Paderewski has been strangely slighted by the phonograph. The Beethoven lion of his *Appassionata*, the majesty and poise of the *Waldstein* or of the *Emperor* Concerto, the transcendence of Schumann's *Symphonic Studies*, the ethereal tonal beauty of the Hadyn F Minor Variations, the tremendous impulse in the great Bach and Beethoven Fugues, his own brilliant concerto, to name a few, are conceptions whose absence from records leaves a chasm in any claim to have preserved Paderewski's art adequately.

Prodigious technique has been the possession of most Russian pianists; the names Godowsky, Rachmaninoff, Hambourg, Lhevinne, and, more recently, Moisevitch and Horowitz, are sufficient evidence. Extreme beauty of tone, freedom from any extravagance of style, impeccable taste, characterize all Godowsky's records. It has remained for Columbia to make available the largeness of his concepts in Schumann's *Carnaval*, Beethoven's "Less Adieux" Sonata, Op. 81, and to a lesser extent,



Leopold Godowsky

nine Chopin nocturnes and the Grieg Ballade. For anticipation, there is the first recording of Chopin's fourth scherzo. Of his Brunswick discs, two original Schubert transcriptions have the beauty and intimacy of an old-world garden. Josef Lhevinne's one available record (Victor) shows his marvellous ease and virtuosity—the Schulz-Evler *Blue Danube*, unsurpassed for octaves. Not only a technician, he is an artist of fine intellect and poetry, one of the most graceful of Chopin players. Better represented on records is Sergei Rachmaninoff (Victor), who has won the esteem and imagination of the American public more than any other pianist since Paderewski. Gaunt, Russian aristocrat, he plays with unequalled strength of accent, infinite command over shading, perfectly controlled staccato, a gloomy power stripped of all romantic coloring. His name as performer on a record is guarantee of distinction; nevertheless, one may emphasize the extreme importance of having him perform his Second Concerto in C Minor, also Schumann's *Carnaval*, and, with Kreisler, sonatas by Beethoven and Grieg. An original *Etude Tableau*, ultra-brilliant playing of Liszt's *Gnomesriegen*, the Schubert-Rachmaninoff *Brooklet*, Beethoven's *Turkish March* and C Minor Variations, a Bach Sarabande, are all unusually fine examples of his art. Mark Hambourg, who used to be called the "Young Rubinstein," plays with breadth, an abundance—often a superabundance—of vigor, and occasionally with beautiful delicacy and finesse. Therefore one can only advise those who wish to investigate beyond his brilliant Tchaikowsky Concerto (Victor) to choose which work they want—Hamburg has recorded almost anything for H. M. V.—and pray for the best.

For musicianship, it would be hard to surpass Harold Bauer, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, or Alfred Cortot, among contemporary artists. Bauer's career is something of a marvel. Starting late to become a professional pianist, he has acquired a technique for purely musical ends that few can match. He is an all-round artist, unequalled in the passion and surge of Brahms, unsurpassed in the harpsichordists, or the changing moods of Schumann. His participation in the Brahms F minor Quintet (Victor) is one of the greatest of all recorded performances. It is doubtful whether even Schnabel (who refuses to record in any case) can equal him in the D minor Concerto—a logical choice for him to record. His recorded *Appassionata* and *Moonlight* Sonatas are noteworthy; and of shorter works, Debussy's *Clair de Lune*, a Schumann Novelette, and a Brahms Capriccio are outstanding. The meagerness of Gabrilowitsch's list cries out for a remedy. Playing of the most

unadulterated artistry, unsurpassed discrimination of tone and style, make him one of the greatest pianists today. In the Brahms B Flat and the Schumann Concertos he is unexcelled, perhaps unequalled. His Chopin and classics are also of the greatest. On records (Victor), one fine solo disc, a two-piano disc with Bauer (Arensky Waltz), and his collaboration with the Flonzaley Quartet in the Schumann Quintet, complete a list which is as valuable as it is short. No similar complaint may be made concerning Cortot, whose services have been employed wholesale (Victor, Swiss and English H. M. V.) in masterworks—not an unsound choice, but perhaps unfortunate in cases where neglected artists could equal or surpass him. Poet, with fire and intellect, his readings of Schumann (Concerto; *Symphonic Studies*; *Carnaval*), Chopin (Preludes; Ballades), Liszt (Sonata), Franck (Symphonic Variations; Prelude, Choral, and Fugue), and Debussy (*Children's Corner*), are all eminently distinguished, and in the case of the last two composers, considered authentic. His contributions to recorded chamber music, in which field he ranks with Bauer, are as extensive. The Cortot-Casals-Thibaud Trio sets (Haydn, Schubert, Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn) are of course unique, and he has collaborated with Casals (Beethoven Variations) and Thibaud (Sonatas by Beethoven, Franck, Fauré, Debussy) singly. Of smaller works, Weber's *Invitation to the Dance* and Albeniz' *Sous le Palmier* might be preferred. Despite a mercurial quality of filigree, Cortot's playing does not yet record as satisfactorily as that of most of the other pianists.



Ossip Gabrilowitsch

Equally noted as pianist, composer, and conductor, Erno von Dohnanyi has used the first and last of these capacities in the only recorded Mozart piano concerto, No. 17 in G (Columbia). Like Medtner, Strawinski,* Prokofief, excellent pianists, or, to come to this country, Godowsky, Ornstein, Schelling, Powell, or Stojowski, he has not played any of his works for the phonograph. Some of the rhapsodies and other piano works, played with his brilliant pianism, would be extremely attractive fare. The same neglect, until recently, was accorded his distinguished countryman, Bela Bartok, also a fine pianist, who has just recorded part of a suite (H.M.V.), also for Columbia, and who should by all means be recorded in his works for piano and orchestra. Also fine exponents of their own works are Cyril Scott (Columbia and H. M. V.), and the younger Francis Poulenc (French Columbia), and George Gershwin (Columbia, Victor). Arnold Bax (H. M. V.), has not yet been recorded in his own work.

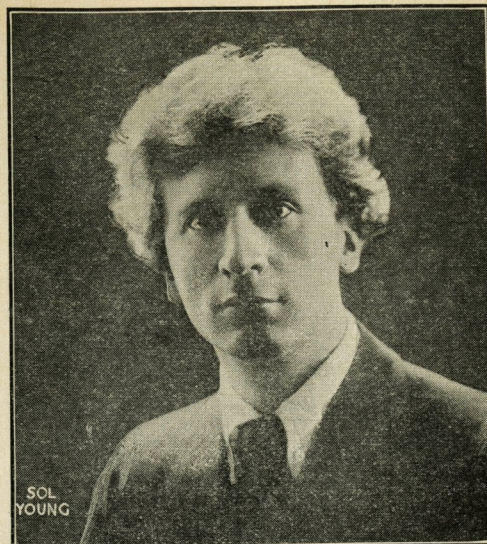
Two saner artists than Rudolph Ganz and Wilhelm Bachaus would be hard to find today. Ganz' sole contribution (Victor), from encore favorites, should lead to works giving wider play to his fine balance and intellect, perhaps his championship of the moderns. Bachaus is quite well represented in the catalogues (Victor and H. M. V.) in Beethoven (Con-

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Since this was written, Strawinski has been recorded in his own "Capriccio" (the subject of Mr. R. P. Blackmur's article, "Necromancy," in the January P.M.R.). This extremely significant word is scheduled for release next month by the American Columbia Company.

certos in G Major, E Flat; Sonata *Pathétique*), Chopin (Twenty-four Etudes), Brahms (Paganini Variations), and a good choice of single discs. Poetry, fire, are less obvious sides of his art; instead, one finds beautiful clarity of thought and tone, a philosophic rather than emotional approach, an amazing technique, and occasionally, something bordering on the efficiency expert. He reveals the structural aspect of a work, its basic content, but his Beethoven has not the majesty of Paderewski, D'Albert, or Ney. In the Paganini Variations, however, he is unassailable, sharing honors with Rosenthal, Lhevinne, and Iturbi. The Chopin Etudes, the Mozart-Bachaus *Don Juan* Serenade, Liszt's *Waldesrauschen*, or the Delibes-Dohnanyi *Naila* Waltz all show his powers impressively.

Also with stupendous technique is the Pole, Ignaz Friedman (Columbia), noted as a Chopin player, whose best contribution is from that composer. His speed and control over dynamics give him access to rarely heard pianistic effects, realistically recorded. His interpretations have breadth, sometimes poetry, but of an unspontaneous kind. Probably no pianist will ever play faster the Chopin Etudes Nos. 7 and 12 from Op. 10, or Liszt's *Campanella*, and very fine are the Chopin mazurkas and his own Viennese transcriptions. His countryman, Raoul von Koczalski, is also noted in Europe for his Chopin, from whom he has recorded a good assortment for Polydor. On the other hand, Arthur Rubinstein, another Pole, is at his best interpreting the modern school. His choice for the Brahms B Flat Concerto (Victor), fine as it is, was a misfortune when the same company could have had Gabrilowitsch. In Albeniz, however—*Navarra*, *Evocation*, etc. (Spanish Victor)—he is beyond reproach.

An intense individualist, Percy Grainger (Columbia) generally manages to interpret a work differently from any other pianist. What he plays is transformed to his own rhythmical mold, but the result is rarely other than powerful and stimulating. An athlete, he is better in the sturdiness of Brahms



Percy Grainger

F Minor Sonata, the Schuman *Symphonic Studies*, or the more vigorous Chopin of the B Minor Sonata, than in his other masterworks. His playing of his own folk-music arrangements and Grieg is rhythmically infectious, suggestive of both the sprightly and the trudging characteristics of peasant dances. In the Grieg Concerto, he is unequalled, a fact which makes more unaccountable Columbia's choice of Friedman for this work. More Grieg, original works, and his vital performances of the Bach fugues would prove valuable additions to the recorded repertory.

(To be concluded)

Phonographic Echoes

The Musical Pillow

The engineering products division of the RCA-Victor Company announces a new type of hospital and Pullman car loud-speaker that is beyond doubt the last word in humanitarian refinement. The reproducing unit is concealed within a regulation hospital size pillow made of specially selected sponge rubber, so constructed that it may be sterilized like an ordinary pillow and the pillow-cases changed at will. The pillow is plugged into a central radio receiving system and while sound permeates the pillow itself, it cannot be heard except by resting the head on the pillow. This eliminates at one stroke irksome earphones, which are liable to chafe if worn for any length of time, and loudspeakers, often impracticable.

While primarily intended for use in hospitals, Pullman cars, ocean steamers, etc., the uses of the magic "radio pillow" are obviously capable of considerable expansion. The pillow may be plugged in on an electrical phonograph as well as on a radio, and the voracious phonophile may now continue his concerts when he is too weary to sit or stand up to his music. The ambitious student may continue his recorded lecture or foreign language course, with the aid of an automatic phonograph and the new pillow, all through his slumbers, instead of sitting up in the light of midnight oil. (And indeed, experiments have been made to prove that music or lectures heard in one's sleep are retained to a surprising extent on waking.) Whether every music lover will jump at the chance to take Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms as bed-mates remains to be seen, but the new device unquestionably will be a genuine boon to the ill, the bored, and the languid.

We wonder what Bach (who thought little of walking fifty miles on foot to hear Buxtehude's concerts of contemporary

music) would say if he knew that in the effete twentieth century it had become no longer necessary even to raise one's head from the pillow to hear the great music of classical and modern times! Yet such labor-saving contrivances need not necessarily be enervating, providing the pillow listener follows the music he hears as intently as Bach followed the music he tramped so many weary miles to hear. Perhaps if Bach had been spared the sheerly physical drain on his energy we should have had an even richer legacy from his hand. But—one is very much inclined to doubt it.

Columbia Artists in Concert

Bulletins from the Columbia publicity bureau reveal many and varied concerts and tours by European artists already well known to the American musical public through their Columbia recordings. The brilliant Don Cossack's Choir has already made sensational "first appearances" in Boston and New York, and the acclaim with which it has been greeted should focus further attention upon the choir's discs. Among the new Metropolitan Opera stars, Georges Thill is the tenor of Columbia's "Carmen" album and is represented also by solo discs, and Ivar Andréson has been recorded in the "Tristan und Isolde" album and in many individual Wagnerian and lieder records. Lotte Lehmann, now appearing with the Chicago Opera Company has been recorded by Columbia and Odeon in German lieder and arias. The Lener String Quartet—represented in the Columbia Masterworks series by some thirty album sets, are making a second American concert tour, and Max von Schillings is the principal conductor of the German Grand Opera Company also making an American tour this season.

Columbia MASTERWORKS*

SIBELIUS

Symphony No. 1, in E Minor

This magnificent symphony is a fit companion for the same composer's Second, issued by Columbia last month, the two releases constituting an event unique in recording history. Again the plaintive and beautiful folk-music idiom of the Finnish people finds expression in the magical harmonies and inspired figures of melody of which Sibelius is master. Increasing familiarity with these wonderful themes has steadily increased the number of Sibelius devotees during the thirty-two years since this symphony was first performed.

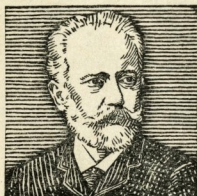


Columbia Masterworks Set No. 151

SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 1, in E Minor, Op. 39.
By Robert Kajanus and Symphony Orchestra.
In Nine Parts, on Five Twelve-Inch Records.
\$7.50 with album.

TSCHAIKOWSKY

Romeo and Juliet—Fantasy Overture for Orchestra



Tschaikowsky's tonal conception of the world's greatest love story no longer excites the antagonism which greeted its first hearing—on the contrary it is now regarded as one of music's most glowing fragments of tone-poesy. This new recording by Mengelberg and his famous orchestra has attracted wide attention for the astoundingly faithful reproduction of the timpani passages which have been so frequently the despair of the recording engineer.

Columbia Records Nos. 67868-D and 67869-D, \$2.00 each

TSCHAIKOWSKY: Romeo and Juliet.
Fantasy Overture for Orchestra.
By Willem Mengelberg and Concertgebouw Orchestra, of Amsterdam.

COLUMBIA MODERN MUSIC ALBUM SETS

GLAZOUNOV

The Seasons—Ballet

This delightful ballet, containing some of the most striking and brilliant effects ever heard in music for the stage, is now, in response to many demands, given American issue. The composer's own conducting adds the climactic element of interest to this fresh and sparkling work.

Columbia Modern Music Album Set No. 5

GLAZOUNOV: The Seasons—Ballet.
By Alexandre Glazounov and Symphony Orchestra.
In Nine Parts, on Five Twelve-Inch Records.
\$7.50 with album.



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*Reg. U.S. Pat. Office

Columbia Phonograph Co., Inc., New York City

Correspondence

The Editor does not accept any responsibility for opinions expressed by correspondents. No notice will be taken of unsigned letters, but only initials or a pseudonym will be printed if the writer so desires. Contributions of general interest to our readers are welcomed. They should be brief and written on one side of the paper only. Address all letters, to CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN, Editorial Department, THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW, 5 Boylston Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Recording Suggestions

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

Should the recording companies ever be at a loss to know what to record, I should like to make a few suggestions. A few of the more glaring spaces on our record shelves have been filled in lately by releases of the records of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, of the Sibelius symphonies, and of most of the rest of Ravel's works which had not been recorded previously.

Miaskowski is a modern composer of importance, who, like Sibelius, has been neglected by conductors and recorders. Records of his Sixth and Eighth Symphonies, works of almost monumental strength, would bring to him a large audience which he certainly deserves. Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra would be the logical interpreters for these symphonies. Stock and the orchestra have given magnificent performances of both works—in fact Miaskowski's music better suits the orchestra than anything they have yet recorded.

I cannot understand why Gruenberg's works are set aside by the recording companies who fall all over themselves getting to the latest Gershwin chef d'oeuvre. It is a pity Erich Kleiber and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra could not have made records of *Enchanted Isle*. Obviously Toscanini would not be the proper interpreter for the piece, even if he consented to conduct it. Maybe Stokowski could be persuaded to do it. And then there are *Daniel Jazz*, *Hill of Dreams*, the *Jazz Suite*, and the various string quartet compositions—all of which should make good and profitable records.

On a visit to South America two years ago I heard a new composition played at the concerts at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. It was a *Sinfonietta*, by Ernesto Halffter—the young Spanish composer, at that time only eighteen years old. This *Sinfonietta* was thoroughly delightful, and I cannot help wishing I could renew my acquaintance with it through the medium of the phonograph.

Speaking of Spanish music reminds me that Manuel de Falla's *Harpichord Concerto* has not been recorded. Harpichord records are rare, and Falla's concerto for the instrument should make a unique recording. Unless the composer himself could be persuaded to interpret the solo part, Wanda Landowska would be the best performer for the work.

Why is it none of Delius's choral works is on records? Why is it we cannot buy a complete set of Brahms's *German Requiem*? And why doesn't someone record Honegger's *King David*? The *German Requiem* and *King David* are available in fragments, but the choral works of Delius, for some inexplicable reason, never have been put on wax.

It would be very appropriate right now while the Ravel vogue is at its peak to have Koussevitzky and the Symphony Orchestra record Ravel's orchestration of Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exposition* inasmuch, also, as it was Dr. Koussevitzky who commissioned Ravel to do the orchestration.

Despite the fact that Stravinsky is the most discussed contemporary composer, our phonographs are silent when it comes to many of his important works such as *Les Noces*, *Renard*, *Histoire du Soldat*, and *Chant du Rossignol*.

Schönberg also suffers from too much debate and too little real understanding. And Bartok and Kodaly might bear some little attention from the recording companies. The wit and humor in Kodaly's *Hary Janos* make the attempts of the modern French school to instill humor in music seem very

awkward and childish. Here again is a piece of music in which Frederick Stock is far more at home than he is in the music on most of his present records.

The list of Debussy's recorded works is by no means complete. *Printemps*, *Jour*, *La Demoiselle élue*, and the symphonic fragments from *Le Martyre de St. Sébastien* are all without which nobody's Debussy collection is complete. Stokowski is a fine conductor of Debussy's music as he has demonstrated in his readings of *Afternoon of a Faun* and *Fêtes*, and one cannot help wishing he would do more Debussy and leave such music as Brahms's and Wagner's to those who make a better job of it.

And next spring, after the League of Composers performances at the Metropolitan, a recording of Prokofiev's *Pas d'Acier* by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra would make available to everyone in the country what only a few in New York were privileged to hear in actual performance. In other words, why not consider last year's recording of *Sacre du Printemps* as a precedent to follow both this year and in years to come?

Oak Park, Illinois

CHARLES H. MITCHELL

NOTE: The De Falla harpsichord concerto mentioned by Mr. Mitchell has already been recorded with the composer in the solo rôle (European H. M. V.). Several of the other works mentioned have also been recorded, but not yet released. We agree very emphatically with Mr. Mitchell concerning the desirability of a recording of Halffter's *Sinfonietta* in D (see the review of a piano piece by Halffter—page 99, December issue). Kodaly's *Hary Janos* suite, Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, Satie's 3rd *Gymnopédie*, are particularly good suggestions. The potential appeal of records of some of the other works named is more doubtful. The Brahms *Requiem*, Honegger *King David* and Delius Choral works are all inevitable, but until they can be done adequately, it is better that they be left for the nonce. Decca's *Sea Drift* pointed the lesson of attempting such a work without proper preparation.

Slonimsky and New Music

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

The appearance of Mr. Nicolas Slonimsky's reviews in the PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW and an article on the "New Music" publications, led to my taking in the town Hall concert last night of his Boston Chamber Orchestra, and I was much interested by the refreshingly original choice of program he offered. I must confess that the "new music" of Ives, Ruggles, and Cowell left me a little baffled, although some of the effects were certainly unusual, and it seems to me that once these composers become a little less self-conscious about their new idioms, they may produce musical achievements of less sensational and more lasting worth. But the little suite by Robin Milford, of whom I had never heard before, struck me as wholly delightful, employing modern resources and idioms not for their own sake alone, but to enhance the inherent animation and spontaneity of natural melodic and rhythmic gifts of a high order. And it was a grateful opportunity to hear the first of Mozart's forty-one symphonies, composed at the incredible age of eight! And I am grateful also to Mr. Slonimsky, whose "relevant notes" on the program played contained the charming anecdote of Mozart requesting his sister to "remind me to give something worthwhile to the horns." She didn't fail to remind him, as this and the works that were to follow bear ample testimony. Perhaps most amusing of all was the other Mozart work, "A Musical Joke," an amazing take-off on the music of the future, with its polytonalities and other devices that modern composers complacently thought they had originated.

When are we to have more chamber music recordings? I have the fine series by the Philadelphia String Sinfonietta, and the chamber symphony by Paul Juon put out by the National Gramophonic Society, but the recorded repertory of chamber orchestral works is otherwise practically nonexistent.

Yonkers, N. Y.

W. J.

Farrar — Pro and Con

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

In common with all other lovers of fine lieder singing I am very sorry to hear that Geraldine Farrar refuses to record again. Much as I prize her old operatic recordings, I would exchange many of them for one or two recordings from her new repertory. Surely she cannot be familiar with the splendid lieder records that have been made in the last two years or she would not make so thoughtless a statement that modern recording is unable to capture the subtleties and intimacy of lieder singing. I am sure that if she were to play only a few of the records that have been made by Elena Gerhardt, Julia Culp, Leo Slézak, Elisabeth Schumann, Heinrich Schlusnus, and other master lieder singers, she would have to abandon her position unreservedly.

Kansas City, Mo.

"LIEDEK"

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

Kindly permit me to question the value of such an article as that dealing with Mme. Farrar in the January issue. It seems to me to be particularly inappropriate to publish such an article in a periodical supposedly devoted to the advancement of the phonographic art. Mme. Farrar, to quote her own words, "shall not record anymore," and is therefore of no interest to record collectors. Her field is now strictly limited to concert appearances. It struck me as being extremely "unmodern" for this former diva to speak as slightly as she did of the "present system" of recording and to overlook the fact that the mailing list of the P. M. R. is a refutation of her assertion that there is "no market from a commercial and jazz-loving public" for discs of lieder. Further, the companies "bent on supplying such listeners" are enabled to push their plans for the recording of classics only through the profits derived from the sale of popular records.

I would suggest that in the future your magazine devote three valuable pages to interviews and discographies of artists who are making contributions to the art of the gramophone, now in its period of renaissance. One must bear in mind that the potentialities of the modern record are great, and that, if anything, it *too* well mirrors the performer and is performance. There are others beside Mme. Farrar who have seen fit to sing a highly-publicized dirge over grand opera. For them to refrain from the wax is an evidence of discretion in which Mme. Farrar points the way for those others who follow.

Far Rockaway, N. Y.

THEODORE B. HANNA

EDITOR'S NOTE: While I have strong sympathy with the point of view expressed by Mr. Hanna, I feel that phonography is on too solid ground to fear the consequences of giving a hearing to its detractors. The Farrar article has in my mind too sound reasons for publication in a phonographic journal: first, by virtue of the historical importance of the old Farrar recordings; second, by virtue of its power to arouse phonophiles to put forward the convincing defence of their art that is apparent to all except those who are resolutely determined not to see. I have received many letters on this subject, of which Mr. Hanna's is the most forcibly and originally expressed and is so chosen for publication. The implied rebuke to Mme. Farrar is, I think a justifiable one. The failure of modern lieder recordings that do not capture "delicate nuances" and that do not command an eager—if still quite small—public, must be attributed to the singer and not the present system of recording. Singers who wilfully pass by the opportunity to record such works reveal either an ignorance of the present lieder recorded repertory or a fear of facing a fair test. I regret that Mme. Farrar does not see fit to follow the example set by other singers, some of whom are much older and whose voices are by no means as well preserved. Elena Gerhardt, for example, while a year younger than Mme. Farrar, no longer commands the freshness and early beauty of her voice. Yet her recordings are an invaluable legacy both to her contemporaries and to posterity, a mine of artistry that would have been an incalculable loss to music if Mme Gerhardt had been moved by the silly prejudice that restrains Mme. Farrar from recording again. Julia Culp is a year older than Farrar; Leo Slézak is seven years older; Sir George Henschel is fully thirty-two years older! Yet each of these has given us lieder recordings that embody the finest qualities of nuance, tone color, and interpretative insight. As for the public, there will always be a "commercial and jazz-loving public," but there will al-

ways be an audience for the best in music as there is for the best in literature and art. The accusation that the manufacturers are not interested in supplying the latter public as well as the former is ridiculous on its very face. Even in 1928 over ninety songs of Schubert alone had been recorded! But one needs only to glance back over the files of the P. M. R. or through the pages of the Gramophone Shop's Encyclopedia to glimpse the extent of the manufacturers' herculean achievements in the realm of the very best in music.

R. B. in reply

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

I am very much in the position these last two months of the singer who said "that I don't care what you say about me as long as you talk."

I have just noticed that Mr. Reinthaler comments on the critique of the Melchior records and mentions that I stated that they were the first in this country. May I assure him that I said no such thing, if he will look closer.

I am also very much afraid that Mr. Wight misunderstands me. I stated, I believe, that the record of Adelaide was not on the list of records that Herr Schlusnus sent me some time ago. Neither was it! I did not mention that, having written the Polydor company about certain of their former acoustical recordings I was informed that they were not satisfactory in view of the late developments in recording etc., and that they were not in a position to supply them. The present recording is the only one that the phonophile can be cognizant of, unless he has much more success in buying from the "enterprising Mr. Mai" than I did.

Herr Raucheisen is, indeed, a fine pianist and now devotes most of his time in coaching celebrated singers in the German operatic and lieder repertory. Gina Pinnera is one of his present pupils. She has been preparing several new operatic roles to sing in Berlin after the first of the year.

Auburndale, Mass.

RICHARDSON BROWN

Justin Elie Recordings

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

In the second instalment on my article on recorded Latin American music, I made the statement (page 44, November number, 1930), speaking of the works of the distinguished Caribbean composer, Justin Elie, that "there are now no recordings (of his compositions) available." Mr. Elie has very courteously informed me that Victor has recently recorded two of his works. These are: *Barbara—Danza No. 3*, a charming little melody with an interesting syncopated accompaniment; and *Angelico—Meringue Populaire*, typical of his Haitian form, and very well arranged. Orquesta Internacional, under the able direction of Eduardo Vigil Robles, Mexican composer and conductor, records these two compositions very suavely on Victor 46558.

Other representative Latin American recordings recently added to my library are: *Capricho Tipico Panameno*, by Alberto Galimany of Panama (Victor 46591). *Sueno Oriental* and *Mi Ramon*, by Luis Delgadillo of Nicaragua (Victor 46592). *Despedida and Natividad de Alma*, by Benigno Ballon Farfan, of Peru (Victor 46834). These are outstanding contemporary composers of these three countries.

I pass this information on for the benefit of any who have discovered the delightful qualities of Latin American music.

W. S. MARSH

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Beethoven's First

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No 1, in C major, Op. 21*, played by the PHILHARMONIC-SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA of NEW YORK, conducted by WILLEM MENGELBERG. VICTOR Musical Master-piece Set M-73 (4 D12s, Alb., \$8.00).

"Beethoven's symphonies rise like a great nine-pointed peak from the mountain range of his work," says Paul Bekker in his book on the composer. How undeniable this is. Even the First of his famous nine-pointed symphonic peaks holds up its head in an individual manner to distinguish it from those which came before it, even though the new master pays his homage to Haydn and Mozart in more than one way. Yet, as one writer remarks, even though we meet the old tradition of Haydn in the opening Adagio molto—we realize almost immediately that Beethoven is not writing in the ceremonial manner of his predecessor. For one thing, as Bekker says, he opens on a chord, which in relation to the key of the work, is a veritable harmonic audacity that must have struck strangely upon the ears of his contemporaries.

Most of us, who pursue the paths of recorded music, are not unfamiliar with the First Symphony. In the old days, we had a recorded version which seemed quite satisfactory for its period on Odeon records. Since the advent of electrical recording, we have had several sets, led by Sir George Henschel's reading on Columbia discs—one of the many albums they issued in their splendid observance of the Beethoven Centennial. More recently we have had through importation the sets made by Pablo Casals for European Victor and the Polydor recording conducted by Hans Pfitzner. And now, we have this performance from the N. Y. Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Willem Mengelberg.

It seems strange that Victor should neglect to complete the nine-pointed symphonic peak of Beethoven's genius. To date, they have given us, at wide intervals, only six of the famous nine, and strange to say—none of these six set forth a really remarkable performance of the work under hand. Just why Mengelberg was chosen to conduct the First for Victor is something we cannot understand. After one has heard Toscanini perform this work—or better, recreate it as Lawrence Gilman says—one wonders why Victor who had access to his remarkable performance should choose to have Mengelberg perform it for them.

Not so long ago, an English critic remarked that there was "a certain square-toedness to Mengelberg's interpretations." A first hearing of the present set forcibly brings this remark to our mind. The especial precision, the resiliency and the finesse of Toscanini is completely absent. Yet, we perform must admit Mengelberg displays a musicianly care and exactitude. Certainly he realizes some lovely moments, particularly in the Andante, yet on the whole his reading is over-weighted and heavy handed. To us, the minuet lacks distinction and the finale lacks a requisite sparkle and grace. We can appreciate that Mengelberg wishes to pay heed to Beethoven's energetic roughness—a quality which ever proclaims his superb humanness; yet, the youthful concept and spontaneity in this work makes a lighter handed and more resilient treatment of its melodies preferable.

Listening to this recording, and again listening to the Toscanini recordings of Haydn's "Clock" Symphony and Mozart's D Major Symphony, it is difficult to bring oneself to the realization that the orchestra is one and the same so completely at variance are the two conductors' manner of handling it.

PETER HUGH REED



Willem Mengelberg

Shakespeare in Russian

TCHAIKOWSKY: *Romeo and Juliet—Fantasy Overture*, played by the CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA of AMSTERDAM conducted by WILLEM MENGELBERG. COLUMBIA 67868-9-D (2 D12s, \$2.00 each).

The tragic tale of Shakespeare's lovers was apt material for the hand of Tchaikowsky at twenty-nine, when his unsuccessful courtship of the French singer, Desirée Artôt, must have sharpened to almost unbearable pitch his inherently sensitive sensibilities. The voluble, domineering Balikirew, self-appointed leader of the group of younger Russian composers, was the first to suggest the subject to Tchaikowsky. It appealed to him, but he must have been irritated and repelled by Balikirew's incessant urging to get down to actual work on the overture. Balikirew even drew up a synopsis of the form the music should take, indicated the nature of the themes, and criticized the composer's first rough drafts. The first performance took place in the center of a storm of musical politics, in which poor Tchaikowsky's piece went quite unheard and undiscussed. But his obstinacy and pride were aroused. He quietly set to work on a complete revision of the work and even ten years later still had the music closely enough at heart to re-call the published version in favor of a third revision.

The scheme of the work is on the old order of symphonic program-making. Friar Lawrence is depicted in the churchly introduction, the tumultuous first theme paints the warring families—Capulets and Montagues, Romeo sings his love song for second theme, the conflict grows more intense despite the solemn warnings of Friar Lawrence, the lovers exchange their passionate vows, and the music closes with an elegaic apotheosis of the dead pair. But within the conventional frame-work

of high-flown romanticism Tchaikowsky finds at moments a penetrative force and expressiveness that rise far above the orthodoxy of his plan and idiom. Discount the sweetness of the lyrical second theme as you will, there still remains a poignancy and tenderness that is indeed not incomparable to those of Romeo's unforgettable invocation to the "faithful night." And surely the breadth and passion of the re-statement of the theme, toward the end of the third record side of the present recording, rank indisputably with the finest pages from Tchaikowsky's pen.

The music has been anathema to me since the week in which I heard it played three times within as many days and by three different conductors. But lately the obviousness and freneticism of so many of its pages repel me less strongly, and in this compact, clean-cut, beautifully planned performance by Mengelberg I begin to see it in better perspective. This is by all means the way in which Tchaikowsky should be played: his emotionalism curbed by a firm yet sympathetic hand, and his frantic outbursts transformed into disciplined dynamic forcefulness. Stokowski did well with the overture (Victor M-46, the first recording to be made of the work), but Mengelberg does better. His greater terseness and surer grip keep the music within four record sides instead of five, yet a fine scheme of contrasts is maintained, and the luminous ecstasy of the purest moments is retained with admirable delicacy and restraint. Following the records with the miniature score one gets a sharp insight into the means by which Mengelberg disciplines and exploits the possibilities of his orchestra. One might ask for greater warmth from the strings in their upper registers, but for little else. The famous ostinato horn passages (that with many conductors become positively revolting in their lugubrious and repetitive insistence) are effective here, and even more so the splendid orchestral writing on such pages as 55 and 56 of the Eulenberg score with the contrasting timbers of brass and wood wind choirs above syncopated octaves on the violins and the marcato statement of the Friar Lawrence theme on the horns—an admirable example of exciting tone coloring obtained with the strictest economy of means. Note also the effectiveness of the recording, with a happy touch of reverberance, in the passages for wood winds on page 20, etc.; the literal pianissimos, even in the timpani rolls; and the felicitous reproduction of the ostinato timpani passage at the beginning of the coda. The measures here for wood wind alone also come off beautifully, and the closing heavy chords as well as can be hoped for, although I strongly agree with Tchaikowsky's friends that these fortissimos make a fussy and impotent ending.

The many concert goers who profoundly lament Mengelberg's passing from the American musical scene will find this release a happy memento of one of his finest performances, admirably recorded, and worthy companion to his memorable Columbia recordings of the fourth and fifth Tchaikowsky symphonies.

Two Sonatas

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 26 in E flat, Op. 81a ("Lebewohl" or "Les Adieux")*, played by WILHELM KEMPF. BRUNSWICK 90123-4 (2 D12s, \$1.50 each).

CHOPIN: *Sonata in B flat minor, Op. 35* (seven sides), and *Waltz in E minor*, posthumous (one side), played by SERGEI RACHMANINOFF. VICTOR Musical Masterpiece Set No. M-95 (4 D10, Alb., \$6.50).

Two major sonatas make February a red-letter month for the piano record collector. Both have been recorded before (although the original Polydor pressing of the Kempff preceded Godowsky's Columbia version by a year or more), but the standing and personalities of all the pianists involved gives each version its individual distinction and *raison d'être*. I had hoped that the new releases might be reviewed by Mr. Nicolas Slonimsky, whose comments on the Godowsky "Lebewohl" and Carnaval and other large scale piano works gave so original and penetrative a light on these recordings, but he has been on tour with his chamber orchestra in a stimulating program of unfamiliar works ranging from Mozart's first symphony and "A Musical Joke" to pieces by Charles Ives and Charles Ruggles. My notes will be of much less value than Mr. Slonimsky's would have been, but the

study of these discs—the first major piano solo sets I have heard carefully for review for several years—has been of lively interest to me, and it is with mixed feelings that I compare my personal reactions with those to the orchestral, concerted, and chamber recordings which have formed the bulk of my phonographic fare.

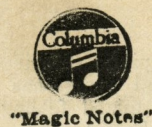
I have not Godowsky's Columbia set of the "Lebewohl" at hand for comparison, but Professor Kempff's sound technical equipment and strongly masculine interpretative powers enable him to bear comparison with the foremost giants of the keyboard. Kempff is a Prussian organist and pianist, born in 1895, known also as a composer and as an improviser of remarkable attainments. The appearance of a series of Beethoven sonata recordings from Polydor over two years ago was one of the first major manifestations of the ability of the electrical process to redeem piano discs from the banjo-xylophone qualities and often insignificant musical fare with which they had been so closely associated before. The present sonata is the first to be released under American labels, but it and its companion releases have had a considerable sale in the imported pressings. Brunswick does well to make them more generally available in this country.

The recording, hailed as epoch-making several years ago, is still to be ranked with the best, although the Brunswick-Polydor Brailowsky series and the Columbia Godowsky and Marguerite Long releases have since made further refinements. Kempff's performance is close-knit, vigorous, and intelligently planned. I like the firmly leashed vigor of the allegro, the snap and punch to the accents, the care with which the upper parts are balanced to prominent bass passages, and the manly reserve of feeling in the andante. (It is andante; the indication "mit gehender Bewegung" is scrupulously observed.) Scrupulosity indeed is the prime characterization of the performance as a whole,—musicianly meticulousity saved from academic taint by the invigorating vitality with which Kempff's playing is so wholesomely endowed. Perhaps Godowsky adds a more sensitive poetic sense to comparable qualities of intelligence and athleticism, but regardless, the Kempff records qualify for an honored place in any record library.

(For notes on the sonata itself, reference should be made to Mr. Slonimsky's description on page 23 of the October P. M. R.)

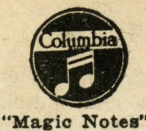
After the sturdy masculinity of Beethoven and Kempff even Rachmaninoff's Chopin betrays a feminine instability and perversity of temperament. The B flat minor sonata has been thrice-recorded previously, by Percy Grainger (Columbia), Arthur de Greef (H. M. V.), and Robert Lortat (French Columbia). None of these are ideal Chopin men; Grainger is the most successful, but his cold brilliance and stereotyped rhythmical mannerisms are less effective in this work—despite the unusual intensity he brings to it—than in the B minor sonata and his larger Brahms and Schumann works. Rachmaninoff's austerity has mellowed of late years. His old Slavic zeal is not missing from the present performance, but the sweetness and light in which he bathes Chopin's pretty melodiousness is somewhat incongruous in so close proximity to the dynamic manifestations of what Hunker termed the "greater" Chopin, a characterization that has led a good many pianists—but not Rachmaninoff—to confound greatness with noisiness.

Of the four Chopin sonatas one is for piano and 'cello and another an early work that is seldom played. The B flat minor shares popular honors with that in B minor, and while the latter is perhaps more generally preferred, the former has been the more discussed and apotheosized. G. C. Ashton Johnson calls it a "tone poem, a reading of life on earth, even such a life as that of Chopin himself." And indeed in France it is usually referred to as the "Poème de la Mort," not merely because of the presence of a funeral march, but because of the organic relationship of all four movements into a single poem of life and its ceaseless, hopeless struggle against the inevitability of death. Chopin had it in his power to give us a great human as well as musical document. There are moments of true greatness in the frantic, jerkily propulsive turbulence of the first movement; and again in the devil-may-care jesting of the scherzo and the restless and meaningless activity of the finale (which Rachmaninoff plays as Kullak would have it, "gloomily, and with self-absorbed expression.") But always the contrasting episodes



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10 inch, 75c { Gazing at the Stars Art Gillham (The Whispering Pianist)

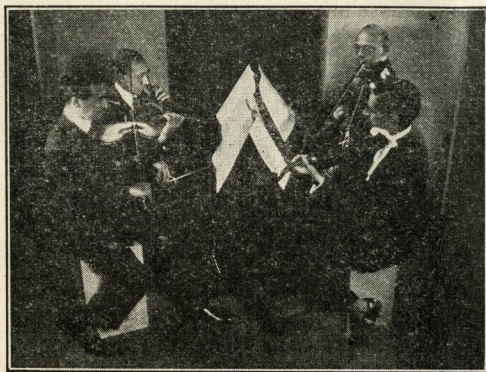
2362-D { Cheerful Little Barful (from "Sweet and Low")
10 inch, 75c { I Miss a Little Miss (Who Misses Me in Sunny Tennessee) Seger Ellis

with their gracefully-turned melodies and accents of the nocturnes and waltzes falsify the impressions built up so vividly. One commentator finds the trio of the funeral march depicting sweet memories of the past blending with hopes of immortality or the everlasting peace of Nirvana. . . . Surely such a Nirvana as only a sickly and spoiled child of the salons could envisage!

But the admirers of the work will be grateful for the orthodoxy and impeccable virtuosity of Rachmaninoff's performance, and the giant Russian's public should thank Victor for again giving adequate discographic exposition of his dignified and fully matured powers. The gracious posthumous waltz in E minor, on the odd record side, is a happy example of his less formalized and more piquant way with lighter fare.

R. D. D.

Mozart Quintet



The Lener Quartet

MOZART: *Quintet in G Minor (K.516)*; played by the LENER STRING QUARTET and L. D'OLIVIERA, *Viola*. COLUMBIA Masterworks Set 150 (4 D12's, Alb., \$6.00).

These records, as they richly deserve, have been much praised in the few weeks since their release. Their recording is up to the very high standard of the recent Columbia Masterworks, and Compton Mackenzie in the *Gramophone* chooses them as the best records of chamber music issued in 1930 in England. The Lener Quartet, in this case ably supplemented by L. D'Oliviera, gives a splendid reading of Mozart's quintet. The *Gramophone's* reviewer suggests that the one fault of the performance is that it lacks the "severity—almost harshness" that he wants. Perhaps, but surely the atmosphere of the work is not that of "fighting aloud," to use Emily Dickinson's phrase, but rather that of the vague but none the less real conflicts most intensely felt in moments of inactivity, when "struggle" in the physical sense is farthest to seek. If so, the Leners are right. They do not oversentimentalize or over-romanticize the music.

Their skill and the excellence of the recording combine to give a fit reproduction for one of Mozart's greatest achievements. Several hearings of this quintet should be forced upon everyone who thinks of its composer as an artist merely in the "lighter" vein, a creator of lovely things which lack the richness and profundity of certain other masters. To make this quintet a part of one's musical experience is to understand why Debussy, for example, found in Mozart Beethoven and some thing more, to understand why lovers of Mozart have felt in him not only surface but depth, emotion as well as form, philosophy (if a bad term may be forgiven) as well as sheer beauty of sound. Edward Holmes said long ago that this work shows "the variety of powers that Mozart brought to composition; the great organist and contrapuntist—the profound mastery of harmony and rhythm are there—but taste and imagination ever preside."

The quintet is in four movements—an *allegro* on the first two record sides; a minuet, on the third; *adagio ma non troppo* on the fourth and fifth; and a last movement, beginning with an *adagio* and breaking into an *allegro*, on the last three. The whole is tied together into organic unity by skilful manipulation of groups of notes capable of various developments and by echoing of themes, but elaborate technical analysis of all

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this adds little to the enjoyment of the listener, since, whatever the devices employed, the effect of unity is clear at once. The use of two violas emphasizes the tone of the work—the veiled, half mysterious quality of the extra instrument according exactly with the mood of most of the composition.

The opening suggests at once that the quintet has been playing somewhere throughout eternity, that it has not "begun" but that the hearer has just become aware of it. The themes try, rather timidly and wistfully than violently, for full utterance, and though the rhythm goes gaily enough the violins and violas seem far from gay as they sigh through bits of the theme. Pauses heighten the effect. Back of the beauty of the phrases is always the feeling of a restless search, sometimes trembling wearily on the edge of despair, sometimes seeming to find a sort of imperfect consolation in making sheer loveliness of expression the sole end. The minuet, as far as possible in its effect from the conventional rather squarely cut minuet of Haydn or Mozart himself, is as regular in form as the most usual example of its type—an opening section repeated, a second section also repeated, a trio in two parts, each repeated, and then a final playing of the two first sections. According to Hermann Abert the minuet with "its zigzagging melodic line and irregular metre" ends still in "weary resignation." The trio has more of calm assurance, something very near content, and its last few notes on the violas have an unearthly and peaceful beauty. The *adagio* keeps the haunting half sad, half tender, spirit of the other movements, and as it proceeds emphasizes more and more a sense of yearning for an unattainable something—indeed, to some hearers its close seems almost like a passionate appeal—in romantic terminology, which is hardly to the point here, "the wail of a spirit struggling against fate." The last movement does not begin with any solution or panacea. Against a persistent bass and a steady throbbing in the middle strings, the first violin now argues, now tries by sheer intensity to find some freedom for its singing, but in vain—until the bass suddenly pauses as if to listen and in a few measures the music swings off into a gay, rocking *allegro* which lasts till the end. The joy is still tempered, perhaps by reminiscences of what has gone before. Themes come

back in new guises; there is no break in the unity though the mood is wholly new. True, the melody at times grows sterner, passages might be so played as to sound almost harsh, but the last note leaves the listener satisfied that the whole work has led up to the frank delight of the conclusion.

In the mass of writing which this quintet has provoked, there is little but praise. Many critics have interpreted it primarily in terms of drama, struggle, passion, of the Beethovenish variety. Nohl said it betrayed "many of the deeper emotions" of the composer's soul and stood alone "in a storm of passionate sorrow, and in the utterance of heartfelt despair." Abert sees it as "a piece filled with the resignation of despair, a struggle with destiny . . . a self-tormenting surrender to the inevitable." Oublichev declared that it was "a complete little drama with its exposition, its vicissitudes, and its happy denouement, but a drama without events . . . a series of psychological studies, which derive one from another and mutually explain one another." Cobbett, though, in his *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, adds a very helpful note of warning against seeing too much of the dramatic, of romantic self-expression, in the quintet. Read these things in as the piece becomes more and more familiar, but let the first hearing be simply the response to pure music, firm in line, rich in color, and sparkling with melodic and harmonic inventiveness. It is music first of all; if it is a psychological document or a tract for the times or a revelation of personality, it is so only secondarily. What it may lose by this from the romantic point of view is surely compensated for by its superb freedom from the kind of stuffiness sometimes felt after too prolonged an immersion in the works of composers who must in music dramatize ceaselessly their own heartburnings, the sorrows of their nations, or emotional crises completely real only to themselves.

Yet, though it is music without a "program" and like other great things in music holds its own by sheer musical beauty whether it seems "sad" or "gay", dramatic or undramatic, it is the work of a master's maturity and is so packed with the inspiration and technical skill of a genius that it may develop itself in many ways in the mind of an audience. The romantic may, if he will, turn it all into "struggle"; the intellectual may find days of delight in following out to the last detail its technical perfections; the less serious will contentedly enjoy it "just because they do."

Written in 1787, it is the work of the Mozart who had just produced a successful "Figaro" and was on the threshold of the last years out of which came his greatest operas and the three most famous symphonies. Perhaps the mood of the quintet is hinted at in a letter which the composer wrote within a few months of the date of its creation: "I have long since accustomed myself in all things to expect the worst. As death, rightly considered, fulfils the real design of our life, I have for the last two years made myself so well acquainted with this true friend of mankind, that his image has no longer any terrors for me, but much that is peaceful and consoling." To others its effect may be that of an autumn sunset, awaking a strange sense of uneasy loneliness even while the color thrills and exalts. Still others may find the music redolent of evergreen woods on a rainy day, when at first everything seems keyed to damp, to grey, to melancholy, until suddenly the eye wakes to color and beauty, and the forlorn and drab becomes jewelled and rich. The quintet, like most great music, is a key that will unlock for each hearer as much as he has of emotional and intellectual response. It avoids the error of some more perishable music in that it does not force the listener into an emotional mold which he breaks eagerly as soon as he may, in resentment against coercion. It does not play upon its audience too obviously; it leads rather than drives. Best of all there is in it the magic which speaks directly to anyone, whatever his prejudices, taste, or mood, unless he can somehow deafen himself to the undying power of pure music, no more and no less, expressed in terms as nearly universal as great art may hope to command.

KENNETH B. MURDOCK

Sibelius

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 1, in E minor*, Op. 39 (nine sides), and *Karelia Suite—Alla Marcia* (one side), played by a SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by ROBERT KAJANUS. COLUMBIA Masterworks Set No. 151 (5 D12s, Alb., 7.50).

Reviewed in detail in the article, "Two Sibelius Symphonies," in the January 1931 issue of the P. M. R.

Mother Goose

RAVEL: *Ma Mère l'Oye* ("Mother Goose"), played by the BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by SERGE Koussevitzky. VICTOR 7370-71 (2 D 12s, \$2.00 each).

I find these "Cinq Pièces Enfantines" among the most appealing things in all modern music. Their leading characteristic of delicate and restrained sentiment is not the one usually associated with the name of Maurice Ravel, or indeed with the so-called "modern temper" in music in general, but an expression of this as perfect as in these pieces, is one which is really as much, if not more of an achievement than is that of giving us a pseudo-primitive or ultra-brilliant canvas as is or frequently done now. To be sure, "expressiveness" is the basis throughout, but it is of such a refined and unbombastic sort that one cannot help being moved by it. It is marvelous how accurately the composer succeeds in reproducing in miniature each one of the tales chosen. The chaste and aristocratic "Pavane" (it has some resemblance, on a smaller scale to the one for the "Infante Défunte") is peculiarly fitted to the "Belle au bois dormant"; the second number picturing the consternation and dismay of poor little Hop o' my Thumb is certainly one of the most felicitous of all, with the childish frantic bewilderment and despair of the expressive violins; what a relief is the unreal and enamel-like delineation of the Fairy Garden after the vulgar over-richness of a similar attempt like the *Valse des Fleurs* of Tchaikovsky's *Nut Cracker Suite*. Throughout there is very much of the charming and unsophisticated emotion of the ideal fairy tale (which almost no one but an extremely sophisticated composer could translate into musical terms) instead of the cloying sweetness and sickly sentimentality which are so apt to be the result of such an attempt.

By issuing this set, Victor fills a gap in its repertory which has somewhat surprisingly existed since the inauguration of the new recording. On hearing the records, however, one is consoled for having had to wait so long. Koussevitzky proves an ideal interpreter, bringing to the music all the restraint and delicacy which one could wish, and perhaps more than one would have expected if he had never heard him play it. His approach conveys the same sense of sophistication tempered by feeling that Ravel seems to have put into the music. It would be extremely difficult to pick any flaws in the interpretation—perhaps the very end of the fifth movement is not quite successful, although previous to that it goes beautifully. This fault is at least in part due to the turgidity of the recording I am sure, which is all the more surprising from the fact that elsewhere the recording, while it wisely never strives for brilliance or inappropriate realism, is a model of purity. An excellent example among many is the lovely reproduction of the exquisitely played expressive passage for the violins in their upper register in the first part of the *Petit Poucet*.

Anyone who does not already know this music should take immediate advantage of the splendid opportunity to make its acquaintance which is here offered, while those who do know it may be advised that here is an interpretation which, as I have said was worth waiting for. R. H. S. PHILLIPS

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The Seasons

GLAZOUNOV: *The Seasons Ballet*, played by a SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by ALEXANDRE GLAZOUNOV. COLUMBIA Modern Music Album Set. Set. No. 5 (5 D12s, Alb., \$7.50).

Glazounov has composed the music of three ballets—*Raymonda*, *Ruses d'amour*, and *The Seasons*. The first, in three acts, is the best known in Europe. The other two, each of one act, have been great favorites in Russia for many years; all of them are little known in America aside from an occasional excerpt played by an orchestra. The music of the great Autumn Bacchanal to which Pavlova and Mordkin danced so sensationally fifteen or more years ago, and which was retained in Pavlova's repertoire, is from this ballet.

The Seasons was composed in 1899 and was staged by the great ballet master Petipa, to whom the work is dedicated. It is a ballet in the old classic style where all the fair sex wore tights and toe slippers regardless of their characterization. Yet in this music one cannot help but sense an advance over the pastry-like music of Tchaikowsky's *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*. It is music of the theatre, but separated from its proper sphere, it still holds the interest and, best of all, is easy on the ears. This type of ballet music differs from that of the modern Russian ballets of the Stravinskian group in that it consists of separate dances, each complete in itself. In ballets like the *Fire Bird* and *Petrouchka*, the music is built to the fused pantomime, dancing and story.

The ballet, divided into the four seasonal tableaux, has a very meagre "story;" each season displays her wares and is overcome by the next season in order, who in turn has her glory and dies. There are snowflakes, frost, ice, hail, gnomes, flowers, birds, zephyrs, naiades, etc., etc.

In the Introduction, on the first record side, Glazounov paints quite the proper musical picture to suggest the dark and brooding mood of Winter; the somberness is only relieved by a sudden blast of wind or flurry of snow. The tableau of Winter contains a series of "variations." The first variation,

in 3/4 tempo, is dance by Frost; the second, in 2/4, by Ice; the third, in 2/4, by Hail; the fourth, in 3/8 by the group of Snowflakes. The music is very characteristic, especially the pizzicati patter of Hail and the swirl and bluster of the Snow which ends with fluttering arpeggios on the harp. During the remaining section of Winter (on the third side), gnomes enter with torches and drive all vestiges of Winter away.

Spring enters to a lively 6/8 dance tempo, with the flowers and birds (fourth side). Then there is a dance of the Roses (early variety evidently!) followed by a dance of the birds. Summer then triumphs over Spring. Summer opens with a broad nocturne-like movement in 12/8 tempo and is followed by a "Waltz of the Cornflowers and Poppies" which is truly waltz-grandeur. The Barcarolle is danced by a group of naiades with scarves (to resemble water). On the sixth side the same theme is developed in the Variation with many instrumental pyrotechnics. The brilliant 2/4 Coda brings Summer to a tempestuous close and ushers in Autumn.

In the Autumn Bacchanale section (probably the most interesting and best known section) on the seventh side, all the seasons re-enter to join in the *presto* 2/4 dance. It is fast and furious and suggests admirably the brilliant tints of Autumn. It is followed by the inevitable classic adagio—the usual beautiful melody embroidered by Tchaikowsky (though not so sugary) harp work. The work ends with the melody of the Bacchanale, this time in 6/8, and, we presume, much pre-Volsteadian revelry.

The recording of the set is generally good although at times there is lack of detail due to a bad reverberation, caused perhaps by Glazounov's orchestration. The records are heard at their best on all electric machine with the loudest amplification. I especially like Glazounov's modesty in avoiding a too sensational reading, a fault in some conductors which has spoiled many a concert reading of ballet music. To those who enjoy the ballet music of Tchaikowsky and like composers, this set provides fine fare and we heartily recommend it.

The odd side is devoted to the *Naila* waltz of Delibes and is played by the LUCERNE KURSAAL ORCHESTRA, evidently a small organization. The conductor is not named, but he has taken liberties with the original, bringing in new orchestral effects (which are at times interesting), making copious cuts and adding a brilliant ending. While not being up to the standard of the Glazounov records, it is well recorded and played. One wonders, however, why we could not have been given one of Glazounov's *Scènes de Ballet* on this odd side, or perhaps one of his cleverly orchestrated Chopin pieces from *Chopiniana*.

WILLIAM H. SELTSAM.

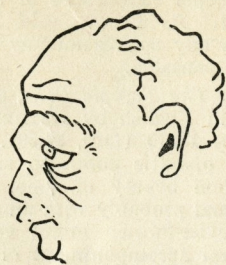
ECHOES: Selective Music

Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo, and their contemporaries, whose rights to space in the library have, until now, remained unquestioned, have had to move over to make room for newcomers on the book shelf. Although classics in their own right, these late arrivals to the family book nook, save for their leather bindings, bear little resemblance to their predecessors. Instead of a treasury of words, they offer their owners a wealth of music composed by such writers as Bach and Beethoven and interpreted by the world's finest musicians.

Since the inception and popularization of the radio, the demand for these "album sets" of records has shown constant increase. According to E. F. Stevens, Jr., record sales manager of the Brunswick Radio Corporation, the reason for this increase lies in the current demand for *selective* music.

"Although with the coming of the radio, it was the consensus of opinion that the phonograph record was doomed for early extinction such has been far from the case," said Mr. Stevens in commenting on the situation. "Through the radio, hundreds of thousands of people have become habitual followers of music. Being unable to find the better types of music in sufficient quantity or of satisfactory quality on the radio, a great proportion of these radio listeners, whose appetites have been whetted but not appeased by what they have been able to find on the air, have turned to the album set. Composed of the works of the greatest composers and embracing selections of well defined types, it offers a ready means for the satisfaction of the recently stimulated demand for selective music."

ORCHESTRAL



Richard Strauss

(from a caricature by Dr. Ricardo M. Aleman)

WAGNER: *The Flying Dutchman*—Overture, played by the PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN, conducted by RICHARD STRAUSS. BRUNSWICK 90120 (D12, \$1.50).

Richard Strauss, is, I imagine, scarcely the man whom most people would here choose to make a new version of the Overture to the *Fliegender Holländer*. Yet I must confess that I was quite unprepared for the energy and vigor which he has been able to put into it. Unfortunately, however, for a definitive interpretation of this overture, more is necessary: the impression of the terrifying and irresistible sweep of the sea, which alone keeps many passages from sounding like mere noise is absent. Strauss seems to lack the proper epic touch. Thus, regretfully, we are forced to turn again to the very early Mengelberg record which—although on its mechanical side often unsatisfactory—has yet to be equalled. As far as I can see the best thing to do would be to have him do it again himself under improved conditions, instead of trying to find others who can do it as well. Since this is so, however, those who are in search of a more modern version, the recording of which, at least, very often gives a very fine effect, would do well to look into this record.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOW: *Le Coq d'Or* Introduction and Bridal Cortège, played by the ORCHESTRE DE L'ASSOCIATION DES CONCERTS LAMOUREUX, conducted by ALBERT WOLFF. BRUNSWICK 90122. (D12, \$1.50).

(Some notes on these selections are given on page 388 of the August, 1930 issue.)

In some ways this music would seem of scarcely sufficient importance for recordings of it to be multiplied, but for those who did not take advantage of a previous opportunity, another one is here offered to obtain it. Wolff is naturally good in such music, but for no definite reason—except perhaps that inherent in the work itself—this disc does not seem to take place with his greatest triumphs. The Cortège is played with the desired brilliance, but the recording does not quite succeed in presenting the ending clearly.

SAINT-SAËNS: *Romance in F Minor*, for French horn and orchestra, (solo played by M. DEVERNY), and (a) MOUSSORGSKY: *The Fair at Sorotchinsk—Gopak*, (b) RIMSKY-KORSAKOW: *Czar Saltzn—The light of the Bumble-bee*, Scherzo played by the ORCHESTRE DE L'ASSOCIATION DES CONCERTS LAMOUREUX, conducted by ALBERT WOLFF. BRUNSWICK 90121 (D12, \$1.50).

This is a rather odd coupling of various pieces, which are evidently considered to have a popular appeal. The Saint-Saëns is just what its name implies, and while scarcely interesting, is not disagreeable. The horn is well to the forefront, but its tone and playing are not always impeccable. Although the two pieces on the reverse side belong in the category of overplayed encore numbers, they are here completely revitalized. Wolff infuses both the Gopak and more especially the Flight of the Bumble-bee with a compelling and fascinating rhythmic zest which quite renews their attraction. No detail of the brilliant orchestration is allowed to pass unnoticed, and in the latter, as is his custom, the woodwinds are given a startling fullness. The recording engineer is an able second, and in this respect also the disc is remarkable—notice, for example, the splendid recapturing of the strings in the second selection. I remark with approbation that the two pieces are separated by a blank groove.

R. H. S. P.

INSTRUMENTAL

Piano

RAMEAU: *Minuet in G major*, and BARTOK: *Allegro Barbaro*, played by GIL MARCHEX. COLUMBIA 2354-D (D10, 75c).

This pianist's name is usually given in Europe as Henri Gil-Marchex, and he is favorably spoken of for his chamber music playing. I had the impression that he had made a number of releases for French Odeon, but an investigation reveals no listings at all in the new Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia, and only one disc in the British Columbia lists: Couperin's *Le bavolet flottant* and Debussy's *Golliwogg's Cake-Walk*. I have not noticed any mention of the present record being released abroad, but probably it has been. At any rate it is very welcome here, both for its happy coupling of an old and new composer who thoroughly understand the peculiar demands of the piano. The Rameau minuet is characteristically charming and I like the way it is played here, rather more incisively than most pianists would play it, but losing nothing in point or delicacy for that. The logic and masculinity of Gil-Marchex's playing is still more strongly marked in the Bartok piece (recently recorded by the composer himself for French H. M. V.) Gil-Marchex rips it off with keen gusto—sturdily muscular music played with stimulating verve and well-restrained force.

CHOPIN: *Waltz in G flat*, and SCHUBERT (arr. GODOWSKY): *Wiegenlied*, played by JOSE ECHANIZ. COLUMBIA 2358-D (D10, 75c).

The Cuban pianist's present release does not seek to emulate the interest or significance of his recent coupling of Halffter's *Dance of the Shepherdess* and De Falla's *Fire Dance* (reviewed in the December P. M. R.), but it is not lacking in more modest attractiveness. The popular G flat waltz with its piquant first theme and haunting second is played dapperly, with perhaps a touch of undue lushness on the already lush melody. The Schubert cradle-song is less familiar fare. In one of Godowsky's excellent transcriptions it makes an appealing little piano lyric. In both pieces the piano tone is recorded without much roundness, but there is considerable warmth in the Schubert lied.

HOLBROOKE: *Wasps* and *Roumanian*, played by JOSEPH HOLBROOK. PICCADILLY 5050 (D10). Available through the American importers.

Holbrooke is a voluminous British composer little known outside his native isle, and none too well there. For years he has been a staunch advocate of contemporary English composers and the authors of some splendidly caustic Philipics on the apathy of the public towards new music. His own productions have occasioned mixed praise. Without a familiarity with his more important works one must hesitate to form an opinion, but from the few works I have heard I find it difficult to consider his writing of such significance. Recently the phonograph has begun to give him a hearing (there was an acoustical recording of his *Variations on Three Blind Mice*) with excerpts from his largest work—a trilogy of operas, the last of which is *Bronwen*. The present recording, by a minor British firm, gives the composer himself an opportunity to present two slight pieces for piano. *Wasps* is a skillful little scherzo, with mild hints of the influence of jazz; *Roumanian* is a pleasantly active little piece working up to more ambitious climaxes than its material would seem to warrant. The composer plays adroitly; the recording is fair.

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Violin

BEETHOVEN (arr. AUER): *TURKISH MARCH* (from "The Ruins of Athens"), and HANDEL: *Larghetto*, played by MISHEL PIASTRO, with piano accompaniments by JASCHA VEISSI. BRUNSWICK 15220 (D10, \$1.50).

It has been a long time since the last Piastro release, and it is a pleasure to hear his vibrant playing again. As always, the Brunswick recording is particularly felicitous with the violin, and even the most intense lyrical measures of the songful *Larghetto* are captured without a trace of wiriness or over-ripeness marring Piastro's fine-spun tone. The serious breadth of the Handel air is well contrasted by the nervous energy of Beethoven's familiar Turkish March, played here in Auer's ingenious arrangement and with commendable verve. A very pleasant little disc of much more substantial merits than most of its class.

CHARLIER: *Chaconne*, played by YELLY D'ARANYI, with piano accompaniments by ARTHUR BERGH. COLUMBIA 5-267-D (D12, \$1.25).

I presume the composer is Marcel Charlier, the Belgian conductor, well-known for his performances of French operas at Covent Garden and with the Chicago Opera Company. If so, he has imitated the old violinistic style sincerely and well. The *Chaconne* possesses a fine broad flow to its lyric measures and a sure sense for delicate yet strong arabesque in its passage work. It is one fiddle piece that exhibits the varied powers of the instrument to genuinely expressive purpose. Miss D'Aranyi plays it extremely well, and the recording retains the resilience and color of her slender violin tone better than most of her discs. A record of grave but warm musical feeling and a first rate piece of musicianly violin playing.

KREISLER: *Polichinelle Serenade*, and WINTERNITZ: *Dance of the Marionette*, played by FRITZ KREISLER, with piano accompaniments by MICHAEL RAUCHEISEN and CARL LAMSON respectively. VICTOR 1501 (D10, \$1.50).

Kreisler's own piece is a re-recording of the acoustical version on Victor 721. It is on the deft, blithely tuneful order of his compositions in popular vein. Winternitz' marionette dance is similarly feather-light in substance, and no less buoyant in performance. A typical coupling of polished Kreisleriana, but a far cry from the Kreisler of the Beethoven and Mendelssohn concertos. O. C. O.

Songs

FARLEY: *The Night Wind*, and RIMSKY-KORSAKOW: *A Song of India*, sung by ANNA CASE, with piano accompaniments by CARROLL HOLLISTER. COLUMBIA 2359-D (D10, 75c).

Two thrice familiar repertoire numbers sung with accustomed quality of voice and style by this American soprano whose records have been so consistently acclaimed by both public and critics. Miss Case has given evidence so often of a catholic taste in her recorded repertoire that it will not be necessary to chide her for choosing such hackneyed numbers. Certainly I am, the last one in the world to begrudge the composer of the *Night Wind* the phenomenal success it has had.

ROMBERG: *You Will Remember Vienna* and *I Bring a Love Song* (from the talking picture "Viennese Nights"), sung by RICHARD CROOKS with orchestral accompaniment. (The tenor is assisted in the second number by Edna Kellogg). VICTOR 1500 (D10, \$1.50).

The celebrated American tenor is again heard to great advantage in popular numbers from operettas. The Romberg style which began in the *Student Prince* is again used here and with such a voice to sing its lilting measures it is indeed fortunate. This is an example where a beautiful voice is put to excellent use and the regrets for "greater things" are not so urgent, although his recent superb performance in Boston of the tenor part of the Mahler *Das Lied von Der Erde* certainly makes us long for some recordings.

BRAHMS: *Die Mainacht* and *An Eine Aeolsharfe*, sung by LOUIS GRAVEURE with piano accompaniments by LOUIS GOLDE. COLUMBIA 50270 (D12, \$1.25).

The very recording of two of Brahms' greatest songs guarantees them a permanent place in the phonophile's library. But the unusual beauty of their interpretation and the warmth of tone that the erstwhile baritone lavishes on them makes them doubly valuable. It has not often been possible to speak kindly of Mr. Graveure releases since he became a

tenor but the present one atones in large part for past sins. To be sure the tone quality waxes a bit Laubenthalian in places but only momentarily, and the singer's very evident knowledge of the deeper significance of the text adds to the listener's enjoyment. As I have said before the price of these records makes any such genuinely artistic performance as this at once indispensable.

WOODFORD-FINDEN: *The Temple Bells*, and WOOD—*A Brown Bird Singing*, sung in English by KATHRYN MEISLE with orchestra. BRUNSWICK 15219 (D10, \$1.50).

The concert and operatic contralto sings two hackneyed songs with uncommon beauty of tone. She sings them a shade faster than usual probably with an eye to making them sound fresher, a device which might easily be used more often. The orchestral accompaniment of the Woodford-Finden number, which is not without its charm despite its constant plugging, proves a shade distracting with the multiplicity of bells used. Which proves that sometimes effects are more vivid when imagined than when actually performed. R. B.

Operatic

DONIZETTI: *Lucia di Lammermoor*—*Ardon gli incensi* and *Spargi d'amaro pianto* (Mad Scene), sung in Italian by LILY PONS, with orchestral accompaniments—flute, etc; obbligato by GEORGE POSSELL. VICTOR 7369 (D12, \$2.00).

Lily Pons is the coloratura sensation of the hour. Her debut as Lucia, heralded by some unbelievable publicity, was probably as much a surprise to the opera management as it was to the jaded New Yorkers who have, it is true, badly needed some such event to restore their interest in the florid repertoire. It is no mean achievement to conquer a Saturday matinée audience at the Metropolitan Opera House, but this petite French singer did it and has already done so again in a second appearance as Gilda.

The eminent critics—some of them—knowing little if anything about the actual mechanics of singing, have gone through their usual disparagement but they were unable to conceal the unmistakable signs of popular approval.

It seems that Maria Gay and Giovanni Zenatello encountered the young artist while on a tour of the minor opera houses of Europe in search of new talent. They offered to make it possible for her to come to America to be heard by Signor Gatti. She came, was heard and was signed to a contract with the Metropolitan, the Metropolitan Musical Bureau, and the Victor Company. As all this happened last spring it is possible that she made the present recording at that time, although she has already recorded extensively in Europe (French Odeon).

The voice itself is extremely brilliant, reminiscent in quality of that superb lushness which Madame Galli-Curci's voice possessed in its prime. Mlle. Pons sings with surprising musicianship, and with as much warmth of temperament as music of this kind ever permits. The higher notes are also of luscious quality and absolutely true to pitch. Further recordings acquaint us more fully with the range of the young singer's repertoire and it is fervently to be hoped for that there will be something besides the same old chestnuts! Lovers of colorature will welcome the opportunity to hear this soprano so soon after the furore occasioned by her first appearances.

THOMAS: *Mignon*—"De son coeur j'ai calmé la fièvre" (Berceuse), and MOZART: *The Magic Flute*—*Possente Numi* (Invocation), sung in French and Italian respectively, by EZIO PINZA, with orchestral accompaniment. VICTOR 6642 (D12, \$2.00).

Either these recordings are superior from a mechanical standpoint or the Metropolitan basso has studied his recording technique, for these are by far the best he has yet made. There is a warmth and vibrancy in his recorded voice which it has rarely possessed. There is a startling resemblance to Chaliapin in many places, and this is meant as high praise rather than invidious comparison.

It is a pleasure to say that these selections are unhackneyed and form excellent contrast to each other. The Mozart aria is sung with the consummate mastery of line and phrase that is indispensable in this master's music. The *Mignon* berceuse breathes the tenderness of Lothario's love for the waif he did not know was his own daughter, and the beauty of the melody is enhanced by the interpretation.



Ezio Pinza

(from a caricature by Dr. Ricardo M. Aleman)

BIZET: *Pescatori di Perle—Del tempio al limitar* sung by DINO BORGIOLI and GINO VANELLI, and ROSSINI: *Il Barbiere di Siviglia—se il mio nome*, sung by DINO BORGIOLI, the first with orchestral accompaniment, the second with harp. COLUMBIA 50266 (D12, \$1.25).

The noted Italian tenor who but recently made his American debut at Carnegie Hall appears to advantage in these familiar excerpts. There is a well-routined performance of the air from *Il Barbiere*, while the duet from the Pearl Fishers, though obviously benefited by amplification remains a stirring bit of operatic singing. The mechanical reproduction again bespeaks the constant strides Columbia is making in the ultimate perfection of this important feature! R. B.

MOZART: *Marriage of Figaro—Crudel, perche finora farmi*, sung in German by FELICIE HÜNI-MIHACEK and WILLI DOMGRAF-FASSBAENDER; and *THE MAGIC FLUTE—Oh cara armonia*, sung by the same artists and GERHARD WITTING and CHORUS OF THE BERLIN STATE OPERA. Orchestral accompaniment to both selections by the BERLIN STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, conducted by J. PRUWER. BRUNSWICK 90112 (D12, \$1.50).

Last month Brunswick brought out an American repressing of a Polydor record of two Mozart airs sung by Felicie Hüni-Mihacsek. This month they follow it by a Mozart duet and trio, in each of which she sings. This, also a re-pressing of a Polydor disc, will increase the debt which music lovers here should feel to the Brunswick company for making available excellent recordings of delightful music sung by European artist probably more expert in its presentation than any commonly heard in this country. "Crudel! perchè finora" is the duet of the Count and Susanna at the opening of Act II of the *Marriage of Figaro*, but the record is in German, and begins with the words "So lang' hab' ich geschmachtet." It is graceful and thoroughly lovely music, made more so by the expression and dramatic quality which Hüni-Mihacsek manages to convey even in the record. The Count is sung by Willi Domgraf-Fassbaender whose voice and artistry compare well with hers. The other side contains a section of the Finale to Act I of the *Magic Flute*. Labelled "Oh cara armonia," it begins with Pamina (Hüni-Mihacsek) and Papageno (Domgraf-Fassbaender) singing the German words "Schnelle Füße, rascher Muth." They call Tamino, who answers with his famous flute. They rejoice together only to be checked by Monostatos (Witting.) They resort to the glockenspiel (which perhaps is not recorded as sharply as it should be, though it makes a charming effect even so) and Monostatos is diverted to singing about the music, beginning "Das klinget so herrlich (Oh cara armonia)". Pamina and Papageno end the selection with a duet in praise of harmony and friendship as the key to happiness. The record, fragment that it is, conveys none the less with its flute, glockenspiel, and three singers an excellent sample of the great opera from which it comes. As a piece of recording this disc is distinctly good, though from that point of view it is in no way exceptional. For the music it presents, though, it deserves a hearty welcome from record buyers. If it succeeds as it should it is perhaps not too much to hope that the Brunswick company will follow it with others of the same sort—a Utopian prospect well worth striving for.

K. B. M.

Choral

WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger—Sorgiam!* (Procession of the Mastersingers) and PONCHIELLI: *La Gioconda: Marinai*, sung in Italian by the CHORUS OF THE LA SCALA THEATRE, MILAN, with orchestra. COLUMBIA 50268-D (D12, \$1.25).

The *Marinai* is a sort of chanty sung by the sailors (supposedly through speaking-trumpets) at the beginning of the second act of *La Gioconda*. The La Scala chorus does not seem up to its usual standard, nor is the recording very satisfactory. The performance is vigorous, but often quite coarse in quality.

The other side contains the "Wach' auf-Chor" in Italian. It seems rather unnecessary to go to Italy for this when it could be done so much better elsewhere. It is quite lacking in the proper refinement and delicacy of phrasing and sung throughout in a more or less rollicking manner which becomes, at the salute to the masters, quite boisterous. The disc will appeal most to those who prefer Italianate performances even of Wagnerian operas.

Maori Music

A *Fishing Chanty*, arranged by the Rt. Rev. F. A. BENNETT and *Two Marching Songs* arranged by P. TOMOANA and the Hon. Sir A. NGATA, LL.B., sung by the CORO ROTORUA MOARI. COLUMBIA 2067-M (D10, \$1.00).

Arise and Ai Maori Love-song sung by the CORO ROTORUA MOARI. COLUMBIA 2068-M (D10, \$1.00).

I must confess that these selections strike me as having been arranged so much that they here lost most of their original character. This is particularly true of the two marching songs which sound like ordinary popular songs in almost every respect except the quality of the voices. In the second record, however, there is a certain hauntingly sensuous quality which makes them more interesting. Still, however, the harmonies and modulations—whether due to an arranger or not—make it difficult for the music to rise above the commonplace, interesting as it is as an example of rarely heard music from Maori.

Light Orchestral

TCHAIKOWSKY (arr. SEAR): *Chant Sans Paroles*, and DE BERTIOT (arr. SEAR): *Scène de Ballet*, played by the J. H. SQUIRE CELESTE. COLUMBIA 50271-D (D12, \$1.25).

The Squire Octet is frankly purveying material that will please the so-called man in the street, but its firm, animated, and refreshingly unemotionalized performances of even such light music as Tchaikowsky's popular melody and de Bériot's neat little ballet piece place its work on a plane far above that of the usual salon ensemble. Altogether a good example of musicianly treatment of lighter music.

WALDTEUFEL: *Love and Spring Waltz*, and ROMBERG: *Maytime—Medley Waltz*, played by NAT SHILKRET and the VICTOR ORCHESTRA. VICTOR 36030 (D12, \$1.25).

A characteristic Waldteufel waltz coupled with a Romberg medley, both performances projected in Shilkret's customary forcible, somewhat unresilient style, and orchestrated in moderate salon-jazz idiom.

GOUNOD (arr. from Bach): *Ave Maria* and SCHUBERT: *Ave Maria*, opus 52 No. 6 played by the VICTOR CONCERT ORCHESTRA, conducted by ROSARIO BOURDON. VICTOR 36029, (D12, \$1.25).

The inseparable *Ave Marias* are played in about the sweet sentimental fashion which one would expect. A harp and bells are prominent in the Gounod, a piano in the Schubert.

Band

MOSZKOWSKI (arr. SOMMER): *Tarantelle* (Italian scene from the series "From Foreign Parts", Op. 23), and KRIER-HELMER: *L Rêve Passé*, played by the B. B. C. WIRELESS MILITARY BAND under the direction of B. WALTON O'DONNELL. COLUMBIA 50272-D (D12, \$1.25).

The Krier-Helmer piece is an energetic military march, played here forcibly enough but with little thought to tonal refinement. The *Tarantelle* performance, while hardly polished, is equally spirited and considerably neater turned. The recording is likewise vigorous and a trifle coarse, but the record should please with its liberal endowment of animation.

O. C. O.

POPULAR

Dietrich

BY this time "Morocco" and the English version of "The Blue Angel" have introduced the latest triumph of the talking films—*Marlene Dietrich*—to these states where it seems inevitable that she will duplicate her European success. Small wonder, for here is a personality and voice of unusual and vivid qualities. Records have a way of showing up the vocal deficiencies of many film stars, unhappily divorced from their physical presences, but Dietrich, with her amazingly flexible voice and varied registers, gets her personality across scarcely less brilliantly on discs than on the screen. Victor shrewdly rushes out her first American record release, English versions of hits from "The Blue Angel"—*Falling in Love Again* and *Naughty Lola* (22593), the former one of the song hits of the season, and the latter a piquant and vivacious bit that fits La Dietrich, to a "T". Despite the disc's merits, however, and the fact that it was also recorded in Europe, it compares unfavorably with the superlatively effective German versions of these two songs and two others from the same film, issued earlier by Victor in its German list—Nos. V-6083 and V-6083. In the German versions Dietrich sings with greater gusto—although her English is quite competent,—the recording is more spacious, and the accompanying orchestra much more brilliant. The English disc is recommended, but those who want to hear Dietrich at her inimitable best will find it very much worth their while to hunt up the German recordings.

Vocal Ensembles

The *Rollickers* desert the popular song field temporarily to tackle Rachmaninoff's *In the Silence of the Night* (Columbia 2353-D). They are a trifle over-serious, but otherwise quite effective. They seem more at home, however, in the more sentimental ballad, *The Dawn Brought Me Love and You*. For Brunswick the *Foursome* does a nice piece of work with Gershwin's clever *Bidin' My Time* and a very peppy *Walking My Baby Back Home* (4996).

Instrumentals

Quentin M. MacLean is the most ambitious of the instrumentalists this month, playing an ultra-expressive theatre-organ transcription of Ketelbey's honeyed morceau—the *Sacred Hour Reverie*. It is well recorded, but marred by the introduction of an ineffectual male chorus (Columbia 2360-D). Brunswick lists the faithful *Palikko and Paaluki*, augmenting their enormous Hawaiian repertory with *Cielto Lindo* and *La Golodrina* (6001), and—for greater novelty—*Harry Reser*, the Segovia of the banjo, in a very snappy bit of original virtuosity entitled *Cracker Jack*, coupled with a more restrained nola, *Flapperette* (4991).

Warblers

I like best *Frank Crumit*, temporarily deserting his usual ballad and nonsense song material to sing commendably unpretentious and unexaggerated versions of *Three Little Words* and *I Miss a Little Miss* (Victor 22579). Close behind is *Seger Ellis* with an animated version *Cheerful Little Earful* coupled with a slower and less effective *I Miss a Little Miss* (Columbia 2362-D). On Okeh 41473 his performance of both *Three Little Words* and *I Miss a Little Miss* is so slow as to lose much of the song's character. *Lee Morse* is heard from on two doubles, *You're Driving Me Crazy* and *He's My Secret Passion* (Columbia 2348-D), *The Little Things in Life and Tears* (2365-D)—all well recorded and clearly sung, but with the throbbing tearful voice Miss Morse has lately affected and which becomes her and the songs far less well than her old-time light-heartedness and zest. *Art Gillham* is characteristically saccharine in *Gazing at the Stars and To Whom it May Concern* (Columbia 2349-D); *Georgie Price* is Jolsonishly big-voiced and affected in *Mender of Broken Dreams* and *Song of the Fool* (Brunswick 4997); and *Lewis James* is over-emphatic and forcible in his ringing versions of *Little Things in Life* and *Under the Spell of Your Kiss* (Victor 22594).

Sandy and Davey

The old tradition of Scotch comedy and song would be in total eclipse this year if it were not for the indefatigable efforts of *Sandy MacFarlane*, who beats the old Scotch masters at their own game. His lilting invitation to a Boston girl to come *Where the Blue Bell Grows* and the more sentimental, but never too lush, invocation to Scotland, *Bonnie Scotland*, are characteristic examples of his well-turned writing and singing. The little speech that introduces the latter song is noteworthy for its modesty, a rare quality in recorded announcements (Columbia 2355-D). *Davey Lee*, of Sonny Boy fame, is heard on a special Brunswick release that should be popular among Davey juvenile public—I've Lost My Dog and Davey Lee and his dog Tatters (Brunswick 4986). Davey appears perfectly unaffected before the microphone, recounts his little stories and sings his songs with an ease and simplicity that might be envied by many older and more experienced recording artists.

Southern

The best Southern tunes of the month are the rollicking ballad versions of *Abraham* and *I'm Gettin' Ready to Go*, sung and accompanied with infectious glee by the *Phil Crow Trio* on Victor 23504 and by *Phil Crow, Robinson and Luther* on Columbia 15627-D. The best of the sketches is the rustic *Debate on Prohibition* by *McMichen, Puckett, Stokes, et al*, on Columbia 15632-D. The yodelers are represented by *Jimmy Rodgers* in the eighth edition of his *Blue Yodel* and a new *Mean Mamma Blues* (Victor 23503). The balladists carry on in the person of *Bud Billings*, telling of the Fate of the *Fleagle Gang* and *He Was Once Some Mother's Boy* (Victor 23500), and *George White* in dulcet versions of *Making Little Ones from Big Ones* and *I Am Just a Gambler* (Okeh 45502). Sentimental songs are sung by *McFarland and Gardner*: happy revivals of *Hello Central*, *Give Me Heaven* and *On the Banks of the Wabash* (Brunswick 479), and less striking fare on Brunswick 492 and 483. The best instrumental discs are Okeh 45501—accordion solos by *Bobby Gregory*, and Brunswick 480—*Pop Goes the Weasel* and *Chicken Reel* by the *Kessinger Brothers*. Unclassifiable is *Stuart Hamblen* ("Cowboy Joe") in nostalgic songs of Hawaii with a prairie flavor (Victor V-40306).

DANCE

Concert Orchestras

RED Nichols and his concert orchestra, featuring the famous *Five Pennies*, are given good opportunity to strut their stuff in elaborate versions of *Sally Won't You Please Come Home* and *It Had To Be You* (Brunswick 20092). I like best the quasi-primitive vocal chorus in the former piece, the symphonic introductions, the well varied treatment and changes in pace, and the occasional scherzo-like interludes. Less striking are the *Brunswick Salon Orchestra* in *Little Grey Home in the West* and the *Anglo-Persians* in *My Little Persian Rose* (Brunswick 6005). The playing on both sides is ultra-songful, although there is rhythmic relief in the latter piece.

Foreign Sauces

Victor seems to make a specialty of dance music with foreign flavors. Following up the sensational success of *The Peanut Vendor* it brings out a new Cuban coupling this time by the *Havana Novelty Orchestra*, heard in *Lady Play Your Mandolin* and *Oh Mama!*, both *Rumba fox-trots* (22597). The former will surely be a best-seller, an extremely attractive tune, seductively rhythmed. The latter performance is the more interesting, however, by virtue of rough and vigorous treatment, in which the fine rhythmic pulse of the playing is embroidered by wild cries and whinnies, both vocal and instrumental. Going northward, French-Canadian sauces are found in *Harold Leonard's* catchy coupling of *En Roulant ma Boule* and *Alouette*, the latter with choruses in French and English,—jaunty folk tunes done in bright and dance-

able fashion (V-5119—French-Canadian list). *Marek Weber* displays the best of German jazz in the haunting tango *Kannst du mir noch einmal verzeih'n* and an extremely sharply projected fox trot, *Wenn die Elisabeth nich so schöne Beine Hätt'*,—a highly zestful piece of playing and recording (V-6160—German list). *Weber's* coupling of *Maddalena*, in march rhythm, and *Veronika Der Lenz ist da* (V-6102) is much less effective.

The Best Ballroom Dance Discs

BRUNSWICK: *Isham Jones* and *Hal Kemp* lead, the former with a strongly swinging performance of a fine tune—*Travelin' All Alone*—and a less distinctive *I Keep Remembering* (4985), and the latter with a vivacious *Them There Eyes* coupled with a smoothly songful version of *Hurt* (4992). *Jacques Renard* does well with bland but graceful performances of *Little Spanish Dancer* and *Under the Spell of Lour Kiss* (4995), *She's My Secret Passion* and *We're Friends Again*—the latter coupling distinguished by *Chester Gaylord's* chorussing (4994); *Abe Lyman* plays *Us and Company* and *As Long as We're Together* in bright, agreeable fashion (4993); *Tom Gerun* displays his orchestra's smoothly colored and well poised tone in *Nine Little Miles* and *What Good Am I Without You* (4999) *Come a Little Closer* and *You're the One I Care For*—the last specially good examples of his nice handling of an attractive tune (6002); *Loring "Red" Nichols* is less colorful than is his wont in a fair spring version of *Linda* and an undistinctive *Yours and Mine* (4982).

COLUMBIA: The *California Ramblers* climb up to the top of this month's Columbia list with their best coupling to date: a dapper version of the popular *Peanut Vendor* and a rough and hilarious performance of the tribute-song to *Notre Dame*, singularly entitled *Twenty Swedes Ran Through the Weeds Chasing One Norwegian* (2351-D). *Lombardo's Royal Canadians* lack something of their customary animation in a two-part *Fraternity Medley* (2357-D), but *Smith Ballew* is at the top of his form in *Nine Little Miles* and *There's Something Missing*, both played with a good rhythmic pulse and some deft fiddle work (2350-D). *Ben Selvin* does well in all four of his performances: *Cheerful Little Earful* and *I Miss a Little Miss* (2356-D), *Little Spanish Dancer* and *Yours and Mine* (2366-D)—all dapperly played. The remaining qualifiers in the first group are *Mickie Alpert*, who does very pretty suave versions of *Tears* and *You're the One I Care For* (2361-D), and the *Ipapa Troubadours* in a fleet *I'm so Afraid of You* and an attractive *Wind in the Willows*—the latter a song somewhat off the beaten track for pieces of light sentimentality (2363-D).

OKEH: the only Okeh discs outside the hot class are *Ray Sealey's* bright and colorful performances of *Hurt* and *You're Driving Me Crazy*—extremely well recorded (41475), and the *Yale Collegians'* undistinguished versions of *Then Your Lips Met Mine* and *Blue Again* (41474).

VICTOR: Best if the Victors are the two *Ellington* releases, reviewed among the Hot Jazz publications. *Bert Lown* comes next, very slow but ultra-smooth and well rhythmized in *You're the One I Care For* and *Crying Myself to Sleep* (22593), more vigorous in *You're Simply Delish* and *Then Your Lips Met Mine* (22582);—all four represent unusually fine tonal qualities. *Rudy Vallée* does his best work in months with a peppery version—largely Rudy solo—of *She Loves Me Just the Same*, coupled with a typical college song—*Washington and Lee Swing* (22574). Vallée's other releases—22585 and 22595 are in less individual vein. *Shilkret* does brisk versions of two popular songs on the nola type—*Baby's Birthday Party* and the *Wedding of the Birds*; the tone qualities are not all they might be (22581). The *Southerners* turn in a songful danceable performance of *Yours and Mine*, coupled with *Leonard Joy's String Orchestra's* *On a Little Balcony in Spain* (22592). *Gus Arnheim* begins weakly in both *Them There Eyes* and *Little Things in Life*, but soon hits his usual animated stride (22580).

Diva and Crown Samples

"Albertus" sends me a disc each of the Diva and Crown productions to exemplify the work of some of the minor companies' dance bands. On Diva 3181, *Lloyd Keating* plays *I Love You So Much* and *You Can't Take My Memories* in fair fashion, moderately well recorded. The Crown example

is happier. *Milt Shaw's Detroiters* do well with *What's the Use of Living Without Love*—Bright broad playing, and *Jack Albin's Hotel Pennsylvania* orchestra does a vivid and forthright performance of *You're Driving Me Crazy*. The recording here is cleaner and much more effective (Crown 1031). Diva discs are made expressly for the W. T. Grant chain stores: Crown records are advertised under the snappy slogan, "Two hits for two bits."



HOT JAZZ

Again the Duke

ELLINGTON, refuses to rest a single month on his laurels. His extensive work of last time is matched by a new series of magnificent recordings, led by a third version of *Mood Indigo* (reviewed last month in the Brunswick and Okeh recordings). Now it is done for Victor in almost exactly the same performance as before, and coupled with a good blues with a fine moaning chorus—*When a Black Man's Blue* (Victor 22587). Ellington's other Victor release (22586) demonstrates that even in more conventional fare than his own compositions his orchestra is still supreme. His versions of *Nine Little Miles* and *What Good Am I Without You*—both grand tunes—are handled with piquant coloristic and coloratura touches that make them hard to beat by any orchestra. Hotter, but no less attractive in ingenious tonal effects are the *Jungle Band's* performances of *Home Again Blues* and a fascinating *Wang Wang Blues* (Brunswick 6003), in which a sweet vocal chorus is amusing contrasting with hot, semi wa-wa interjections from Ellington's own vocalist—the versatile drummer of the band—Sonny Greer.

White and Black

Venuti's Blue Four invariably claim a place in the sun: this month they do *Sweet Sue Just You* and *I've Found a New Baby*, the latter with a singularly expressive introduction, and both rich in speedy solo work for fiddle, bass sax, guitar, and even the bull fiddle (Okeh 41469). *Blue Steele* starts off *Worries on My Mind* with echoes of *Rachmaninoff's* notorious prelude, going into a plaintively lamenting piece; the coupling is a richly sonorous slow waltz, *Missouri Moon* (Victor 23501).

Fletcher Henderson follows up his fine release of last month with another equally good—a swinging *Keep a Song in Your Soul* coupled with a very jaunty, infectiously swinging *What Good Am I Without You?* (Columbia 2352-D). *Luis Russell* turns in a fast and vigorous *High Tension* coupled with an even fleet, but lighter *Panama* (Okeh 8849). The remaining discs are all from the Victor Red Hot Dance list: *McKinney's Cotton Pickers* in an effective treatment of a fine tune—*I Miss a Little Miss*, coupled with *After All* on 23024; *Red* and his *Big Ten* making a felicitous debut in a care-free *I'm Tickled Pink* and a broader *That's Where the South Begins* (23026); *Bennie Moten* in *Won't You Be My Baby* and a very catchy performance—enlivened by stuttering wa-wa work—of *Somebody Stole My Gal* (23028); *Fess Williams* in a fast and furious *All for Grits and Gravy*, and a performance of *She's Still Dizzy* that is marked by some remarkable slap-tonguing from the clarinetist and some rhapsodic soprano sax playing (23025). Finally there are *Tiny Parham's* nostalgic, appealing slow fox trot *Blue Moon Blues*, and a vigorous but not heavy *Doin' the Jug-Jug stomp* (23027).

RUFUS

Current Importations

The "Hammerklavier" Sonata

IT IS good to realize that Felix Weingartner, one of the foremost living exponents of Beethoven's music, should have chosen to transcribe the great "Hammerklavier" sonata (English Columbia LX43-47). Those who are familiar with his book *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies* know with what solicitous regard and veneration he has approached the nine symphonies, and with what loving care and attention he has endeavored to assist the interpreter to perfect their expression in line and detail. In seeking to improve certain sections of the various works, he has wisely remembered that all "changes should be conducted with the utmost prudence and good taste, since there was a great danger lest the most important thing of all—Beethoven's own peculiar style—might suffer." For this reason, undoubtedly in transcribing the sonata in B Flat, Opus 106, he adhered to the instruments used in Beethoven's own orchestras; thereby avoiding distortion of spirit and style.

The purists may resent the transcription of this work. They may argue that Beethoven had an orchestra in his day and could have orchestrated this sonata or written it for that most impressive body of instruments if he saw fit, etc. Very likely, from their viewpoint, the argument may prove unanswerable as well as endless. After all, these things are a matter of individual taste, and taste, as we all know, with some people is strangely limited. We, however, completely disagree with the purist's viewpoint in such matters, for just as we believe many of Bach's Organ Chorales have been made more impressive in orchestral dress, so we feel this great work has found new and more glorious lights and shades revealed in its poetic beauties by this transcription. The extreme length of the mighty fugue, or final movement, to our way of thinking, is made more forcible in inspiration, more eloquent in its contrapuntal laboriousness. On the piano, we have never thought this work completely impressive; even when interpreted by some of the foremost pianists of our day. Somehow its musical abstraction, its emotional profundity seemed to cry out against the limitations of that instrument.

There are those who contend that Beethoven was thinking in the terms of an orchestra when he wrote his last five sonatas for the piano. And there are those, who feel that he wrote in this work "for an instrument which never existed and never will exist"; since they believe "he moved in an abstract world of music," playing "not with sounds but with conceptions of sounds, using the language of the piano symbolically." On the strength of this, we may believe that Weingartner's excellent transcription is not, nor can it ever be, the ultimate answer for the "Hammerklavier" Sonata. There are those who contend "there is a sort of sense of the invisible and a vision of the infinite, mingled with the power of this composition."

All of this is understandable after we have passed that first acquaintance with this work, and have penetrated its superb depths, its curiously—yet carefully-moulded loftiness, and its yearning utterance born of a suffering of soul, mind and body. Whether the sustaining powers of the music are truly enhanced by Weingartner's felicitous transcription, as our first acquaintance would tend us to believe, or not, cannot be immediately decreed. One must perforce, live with a work like this to really sav. Fortunately the reproducing privilege of the records will permit this. We will grow to know whether those writers, who contend that the poetic grandeur of the Adagio will fatigue as well as hold our attention, are right or not; whether the mighty Fugue is really "a magnificent but chaotic mistake—of genius."

Beethoven, we are told, received a grand piano in 1818 from the firm of Broadwood, London manufacturers, and that his enthusiasm for it rekindled the fires of his inspiration toward piano composition. Hence it is universally conceded that it is not unlikely that he was prompted to compose this sonata by that same piano. We are likewise told that

Beethoven had been in the throes of suffering both physical and spiritual for several years when he created this work in 1818-1819. The reflection of that state is undeniably apparent in the music, even though we realize the vigorous genius of the man prevented it from becoming at any time a personal exploitation of his human emotions. His deafness and the worrying nature of outward circumstances, augmented at this time by his ungrateful nephew for whom he bore a tenacious love, must have enveloped him. Unquestionably they had driven him in upon himself, as one writer expresses it, and caused the altered tone apparent in his later works; for they reveal at times an inspirational force which seems to have been forcibly torn from the inner man.

Of the performance of this work and the recording, one can be quite satisfied. Weingartner knows Beethoven—and as we have said—loves him. In the Adagio, he makes us completely conscious of its superb poetry, its inner note of sorrow—seemingly born of a spiritual resignation. Here "is rare music in the fullest sense," says W. R. Anderson the eminent critic of *The Gramophone*, "moving in rarefied air, upon a mountain apart." Our mutual agreement on the transcription is reflected in the sentence which follows—"I feel sure that this great and closely-argued music," continues Mr. Anderson, "is more richly commended to most in this orchestral form than the piano." As a result of Weingartner's transcription of the Fugue, we feel, much has been accomplished to abuse the dissatisfaction voiced by so many writers. As Mr. Anderson writes—it shapes magnificently at the start, and is full of science whose intimations the orchestra helps one to catch." The recording seems to us, to be of the best which we have come to know and appreciate from Columbia. That there are limitations in this and all recordings we believe no one will deny, but that this is a fine example of orchestral recreation we also believe no one will deny. Therefore, Columbia deserves unstinted praise for bringing us this great work, so splendidly and so realistically recorded.

PETER HUGH REED

Mompou

FEDERICO MOMPPOU, who is gradually acquiring recognition as a poet of the keyboard fit to rank in the great succession of composers of piano music, is still little known in this country. George Copeland, Iturbi, and pianists of less fame have introduced some of his pieces, but as yet Mompou's name is unfamiliar to most concert goers, and the majority of his works are quite unknown even to connoisseurs of modern piano music. Even in the 1929 edition of Pratt's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* his name is omitted. I am grateful to Mr. William Sewall Marsh for a biographical note, appearing in his invaluable booklet, "Musical Spain."

"Mompou, Federico: Spanish composer, b. Barcelona, 1895. Studied under F. Motte Lacroix. He calls the style of compositions which he has evolved *primitivista*. He strives for the greatest simplicity of means of expression, and has dispensed with bar divisions, key signatures, and cadences. A French critic states that some of Mompou's music could be dictated in words without making use of any conventional music-writing method. He has a large Parisian following. Most of his works are in the suite form—all for piano: *Cancô i Danca*; *Impressions Intimes*; *Cants Magics*; *Suburbis*; *Pessebres*; *Carmes*, etc."

The first composition of Mompou to be recorded is the suite of pieces, *Cançons i Dancas*, Nos. 1 to 4, each of which occupies one record side (Spanish H. M. V. AA-172 and AA-175). The composer is the pianist. On a third disc—all of them are ten-inch—Mompou plays another composition of his own, *Secret*, and an original arrangement of Chopin's Waltz in A minor (AA-177). The *Cancô i Danca* pieces are written without bar lines, except in the second section of No. 2—a charming little air that suggests a French noel or *bergaerette*. Each piece is in two or more divisions, usually of contrasting qualities. The first begins

gravely, with a tender expressive melody treated somewhat in the manner of Satie's *Gymnopédies* (indeed Mompou's music is immediately comparable to that of the Frenchman in his more serious moments), and later breaks into a solemn little dance. The third piece is subtitled *Populaires*, and some of the sections are much breezier and more frankly tuneful than those of the other pieces. In the third there is a return to the haunting melodiousness and compassionate expressiveness of the first two, although again there are moments of greater rhythmic impulse. Mompou's simplicity is not than of the pseudo-naïve artist: it is an engaging and direct as the frankness of a child. These little pieces, whether or not they actually embody folk songs or idioms, are fresh from the undefiled well of purest folk music. Like the work of Delius they "are to be tasted without passion, without impatience." The phonograph again commands our gratitude for giving us the acquaintanceship of a composer who writes from the heart, and whose work will surely live.

Mompou's textural revisions of the Chopin waltz confirm the impression made by his own music. The piece is enriched without inflation, and one realizes how deficient in many respects was Chopin's own sense of texture and contrapuntal weaving. The performances throughout are the utmost in restraint and poetic feeling. The recording is evidently considerably amplified—a constant hum is audible—but possibly this was necessary on account of the extreme softness and delicacy of nuance with which Mompou plays. At any rate, I would not part with these discs if they were a hundred times less effectively recorded. For me they are a part of that small but exceedingly precious musical repertory that reveals at once a sympathetic and intimate kinship with the most secret springs of one's sensibilities.

Three Debussy Sonatas

In his last years Debussy might have said with Rameau, "Day by day my taste is improving, but my genius is disappearing." After the second book of piano preludes, appearing a couple of years before the war, Debussy's compositions were regarded as diluted imitations of his earlier works, revealing, of course, his invariably immaculate craftsmanship and delicate sensibility, but sadly lacking in originality and freshness of inspiration. Yet others find in them the "quickening of a new impulse," and the utilization of his earlier methods not for their own sake, as before, but as a means to a new end. These later works were composed mostly in classical forms, and most important among them was the projected series of six sonatas for various chamber combinations, of which were actually written: the sonatas for 'cello and piano (1915), violin and piano (1916), and flute, viola, and harp (1916). The rare production of these works in concert and the consequent inability of Debussists to determine for themselves whether or not contemporary judgment on the sonatas was justified gives a special significance to the release of recorded versions.

The most recent to appear is the first in the order of composition, the sonata for 'cello and piano, played on French Columbia LFX-6 by Maurice Marechal and Robert Casadesus. The work comprises three movements: Prologue, Sérénade, and Finale, each taking a record side. On the fourth side the same artists play the Danses des Petits Negres from Andre Caplet's Epiphanie. The other sonatas are also recorded, that for violin and piano first by Andre Maneot and Lyell Barbour on N. G. S. 127-8, and more recently by Jacques Thibaud and Alfred Cortot on French H. M. V. DM-1322-3; the trio was recorded much earlier by Moise (flute), Laskine (harp), and Ginot (viola) on French Odeon 165, 243-5. The violin work is in three movements (Allegro vivo, Intermede, and Final) each taking a record side; the "filler" of the French set is an arrangement for violin and piano of the prelude, Minstrels, and of the N. G. S. set Barbour's solo piano performance of prelude, Les sons et les parfums tourment dans l'air. The flute-harp-violon work is also in three movements (Prelude, Interlude, and Finale) each taking both sides of a ten-inch disc.

Of the three works the sonata-trio is the most immediately appealing for its animation, elastic close-knit melodic weaving, and its delicate nuances of tonal coloring; but the 'cello sonata is perhaps the most striking, and certainly the most impressively recorded. Its material is at once most enigmatic and most forcibly projected of the sonatas. Marechal, one of

the foremost French 'cellists, and Casadesus play it with tremendous bravura—ranging from the somber, elegaic mood of prologue to the almost hysterical intensity of the finale with passionate fervor. The recording is exceedingly powerful. Whether it is music destined to live and to add to Debussy's stature is impossible to forecast. But it does cast a new if somewhat baffling light on the composer himself, and it is not to be ignored by anyone who would know him and his music in their entirety.

The violin sonata is prettier and more lyrical music than either of the others, but lacking the trio's forthrightness and color, and the 'cello sonata's impressiveness. The performances by the Mangeot-Barbour and Thibaud-Cortot duos are closely comparable. Cortot is supposed to be familiar with the composer's intentions regarding the performance, and he coached Mangeot and Barbour in the tradition. Most collectors will probably prefer the celebrity version, but since the recording qualities are of nearly equal excellence, I give the edge to the N. G. S. artists, partly for their greater spontaneity and partly for Barbour's performance of "*Les sons*" on the odd side; men of Thibaud and Cortot's calibre should be ashamed for recording such an anomaly as a violin transcription of *Minstrels*. The piece on the odd side of the 'cello records is amusing—a highly vivacious *Danse des petits nègres* by Caplet, played here with the same brutal virtuosity that Marechal evidences in the sonata. R. D. D.

IRA VOCALS

FOR the first time I have had the pleasure of hearing some of the IRA novelties and it has been with the keenest interest that I have written down a few of my impressions.

In the first place there was not one uninteresting record in the entire list and one at least is on my indispensable list. The repertoire itself is such a welcome relief from the rank and file of releases that it behooves me to mention it here.

The first group that I played was from that comparatively well-known firm Pathé Frères. M. AQUISTAPACE sings the air, "Papagena, Papagena," from the Magic Flute and the more familiar "Voilà donc" from *Thais*. Not sensuously beautiful itself, the singer's voice presents an interesting example of tonal drama as does that of M. JOSE BECKMANS in Dapertutto's air from the Tales of Hoffman and Mephistopheles' Serenade from Berlioz' *Damnation of Faust*. I do not care for the latter's falsetto ending in the first aria but perhaps I have been spoiled by hearing De Luca sing it in the Metropolitan's excellent performance. Messrs. VILABELLA and GEORGE VOLLIER join voices in Bizet's *Agnus Dei* and Faure's *Le Crucifix*. Both numbers need the organ for complete effectiveness but are sung with much élan.

With a trademark of Christschall surmounted by crossed keys is a record comprising the *Agnus Dei* of Viadana sung by the CHORUS OF THE CHURCH OF HERZ-JESU in Charlottenburg, and on the reverse, *Viadana Toto Pulera* sung by AUGUSTO GARAVELLO, bass-baritone. These two liturgical numbers are given a proficient performance, the reproduction enhancing the choral voices.

The gay label of the Perfectaphone is reflected in the Romance, *Garde ton coeur*, *Madeleine* and *Lilas Blancs*, "Idyle Parisienne" both sung in typical music-hall style by MARJAL, (de L'Européen) accompanied by a Symphony orchestra (no less!). These are two songs obviously in the lighter vein whose words, intoned with much gusto by the soloist will prove interesting to those who know French and whose melodies will charm those who don't.

The triangular trade-mark of the Artiphon heralds more serious fare. EUGEN TRANSKY sings the Steersman Song from *Der Fliegende Holländer* and Siegmund's Love Song from *Die Walküre*. The resonance of this record is appalling but otherwise, it is well-done. There are two choruses: *Die Ganze Welt* by Klein and Erquicke mich mit deinem Licht by Becker, sung by the IMMANUEL KIRCHENCHOR under the direction of R. Abel. Admirable music admirably sung. FRANZ, bass of the Berlin Staats Oper, sings *Fünftausend Taler*—the air of Baculus from the opera *Der Wildschütz* by Lortzing (better known for his *Zar und Zimmerman*) and *Osmin's Song* from the *Escape from the Seraglio*, the semi-forgotten opera of Mozart which has received well-merited

(Continued on the last page)

The Phonophile's Bookshelf

The Gramophone Shop's Encyclopedia

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE WORLD'S BEST RECORDED MUSIC. Second Edition. Completely revised and compiled by Richard Gilbert. New York, The Gramophone Shop, Inc. XII plus 371 pages, 25c.

About a year and a half ago The Gramophone Shop put out the first edition of its Encyclopedia, something very closely akin to an epoch-making achievement in disc-cataloguing, for hitherto the only catalogues covering releases by all companies has been extremely limited in character. The plan of the first edition of the encyclopedia (which we understand attained a circulation of well over ten thousand) has been largely followed in the new book, but it has been greatly elaborated and enlarged.

The principal section of the book, 232 pages, is devoted to an alphabetical list of composers and their recorded works. Lists of miniature scores and biographies, critical studies, etc.,—which were included in the encyclopedia—are now omitted, allowing space for many more record listings. Commendably, however, an occasional musical book of exceptional worth is announced in the section devoted to the composer with whom it deals. Section II is an index of artists, 50 pages, in condensed but convenient form. Six pages are devoted to recorded church music, and a new section of some seventy pages covers imported popular records by stars of the light opera houses, music halls and cabarets of Europe and the Orient. Nor are "historical" records and the International Educational Society's lecture-discs forgotten. Finally, there is an index of composers, covering both those in the popular section as well as in part I.

The monumental nature of such a record encyclopedia is apparent to even the most casual glance, but only one who has toiled over hundreds of separate manufacturers' catalogues and bulletins to compile even a brief list of the works of one composer, will be appreciated fully what tremendous work and patience and care are involved. Mr. Richard Gilbert has attacked the task logically and accomplished it remarkably well. In plan the encyclopedia is a model of all that a record catalogue should be, and in extent it surpasses anything that has ever been attempted before. Thousands of the discs listed here have never been brought to the attention of American music lovers before, and thousands of others are resurrected from domestic catalogues and an infinite variety of supplements and special lists. Here, to the phonophile, is a paradise enow of the greatest music of the world in recorded form, and to the historian and student, an astounding commentary on the progress of phonography in the space of the few short years of electrical recording.

Some idea of the wealth of recorded masterpieces is indicated by the number of pages devoted to the works of the great classical and modern composers. Wagner commands over nineteen pages; Bach, Mozart and Beethoven eight each, Schubert over seven; Debussy over six; Verdi over five; Tchaikowsky over four; Richard Strauss four; Handel, Schumann, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Puccini, Ravel, Rimsky-Korsakow, Saint-Saens, each three or over; De Falla, Moussorgsky, Haydn, Grieg, Gounod, and Johann Strauss each two or over. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that dozens of musical geniuses whose works are a rarity on concert and who have been known only to students and connoisseurs are now available to the laymen in recordings that bring their works suddenly alive from the tomb of musical dictionaries and reference books; Buxtehude, Corelli, Cherubini, Daquin, Destouches, De Lassus, Farnaby, Farmer, Greene, Loeillet, Monteverdi, Peri, Vivaldi, Wilbye, and many others. The moderns are likewise richly represented, and not only by the more famous names. Composers whose works may be heard in concert only in the larger musical centers may now be heard and carefully studied wherever a phonographic turntable spins: Mompou, Nin, Poulenc, Bartok, Lord Berners, Bussoni, Caplet, Carrillo, Malipiero, Fabini, Eichheim, Griffes,

Ibert, Krenek, Medtner, Syzmannowski, Villa-Lobos, Harsanyi . . . the list might be continued for a page or more.

Obviously the extent and detailed nature of the compilation involve some errors in the listings. But these have been held to a surprising minimum. The announcement of Columbia's price revision in certain of its Masterworks records came too late for the prices to be corrected within the general lists, but detailed notes on the new prices are inserted at the beginning of the encyclopedia. Criticism may justly be levelled, however, at the occasional deviations from the practice of identifying manufacturers by code letters. The appearance of one manufacturer's name in full, followed by another recording of the same work identified only by code (as happens in several instances, particularly among the operatic albums) mars the impartiality and fairness so commendably adhered to elsewhere. Again, a number of works released by Brunswick in this country are listed in the original Polydor pressings. Brunswick's notable work in making these discs generally available in American should not be so cavalierly treated. A number of unusually interesting and significant releases in the Victor educational series have also slipped by. I find no mention of Juliet Gaultier's Eskimo and Canadian folk song discs at all. The De Lassus *Matona Mia cara*, sung so beatifully on one of the educational releases, is listed only in an imported recording. Occasionally a worthy duplicate recording of a work is not included: Coppola's version of *Espana*, for instance, which is by far the best. Also the Columbia *Academic Festival* overture conducted by Dr. Stiedry, Ignace Hilsberg's Brunswick disc of Chasins' *Prelude in D* (not elsewhere recorded) and *Rush Hour in Hong-Kong*, Gieseking's Homocord records, including the Debussy *Arabesques*, a Bach *Partita*, etc.), Münz's only recording (Homocord), Eugene Goossens' Victor version of Dvorak's *Carnival* overture, the N. G. S. and Victor versions of the Ravel quartet, the English Columbia version of Rimsky's *Caprice on Spanish Themes*, etc. But such inevitable oversights are commendably infrequent. On the other hand praise goes to the editor for his careful notes on several composers who are almost invariably confused in record catalogues.

Messrs. Tyler and Brogan of the Gramophone Shop must surely rank with the history-making pioneers of phonography. Their encyclopedia is infinitely more than a catalogue of stock, it is a reference work of unparalleled value to every music lover. Record dealers and collectors will find it indispensable, and it should find an equally important niche in public and university libraries. Its publication is a musical event of very considerable significance. Every phonophile owes it to himself not only to possess a copy, but to see that his library and dealer and friends own one.

The Popular Music Racket

TIN PAN ALLEY. A Chronicle of the American Popular Music Racket. By Isaac Goldberg. New York, The John Day Company. 341 pages, \$3.50.

Dr. Goldberg writes vigorously and well on subjects ranging all the way from Spanish-American literature and Havelock Ellis through the Savoyards to jazz. Lately music has commanded his first attention. His *Story of Gilbert and Sullivan* is one of the best of all books on the incomparable twins and their eternally vernal operettas. His is the anonymous author of record reviews in a leading journal, and many magazines and newspaper articles reveal him as a shrewd and enlivening observer of contemporaneous musical activities. *Tin Pan Alley* does what has not been done before so completely and pointedly: it traces the evolution of popular music in America from the fantastic and clumsy exploits of William Billings—a colonial Richard Strauss a century before his time—to its present day inflation into a Big Business, with mass production and high pressure salesmanship and publicity methods. George Gershwin, who writes a preface for the book (an astonishingly naïve and self-revelatory piece of writing) is incontestably right when he hails it as a book that

(Continued from page 169)

attention of late. Herr Sauer is a bass comedian with a fine voice and unctuous humor in his tones. His genuine sense of humor however does not obscure the splendid Mozart style not the musicianly manner in which the demands of the lighter Lortzing number is met.

Turning to the lesser known English records we have at hand a Witton record by one ANTONIO NOTARIELLO of Eric Coates' Bird Songs at Eventide and Tosti's Ideale, the one with piano, the other with violin and piano accompaniment. The record envelope heralds Signor Notariello in no uncertain terms and the delightful part of it is that the record itself almost lives up to the assertions. He has a voice of beautiful quality, distinctive in timbre, although at times inclined to whiteness which in this instance fails to detract from the total effect of his singing,—well worthy of celebrity attention. Music lovers who really know a beautiful voice when they hear one should own this record.

RICHARDSON BROWN.

A Bruckner Society

To do belated honor to a neglected genius, the admirers of Anton Bruckner's music, have banded together to form a Bruckner Society of America, affiliated with the European society which has been indefatigable in promoting the performance of Bruckner's works abroad. The American society, endorsed by such musical notables as Lawrence Gilman, Kleiber, Koussevitzky, Stock, A. Walter Kramer, Olga Samaroff, etc., proposes to "have performed with befitting frequency and regularity the works of Bruckner, of Mahler, and of modern composers who are carrying on the glorious tradition." Through its European affiliation the society can procure for its members preferential rates in the purchase of books on Bruckner, and in the reservation of tickets at festivals abroad. The society will offer at least once a year a lecture recital by well recognized lecturer-artists. The European society will mail its quarterly journal, containing Bruckner information of timely interest, to members of the American society.

While Bruckner's works are as yet very inadequately represented phonographically, the release of the complete seventh symphony by Polydor, and of the scherzos from several other symphonies, augmented by several choral recordings by the European Bruckner's society's chorus, have aroused the appreciative attention of many phonophiles. Through co-operation with the Bruckner society in this country it will undoubtedly be possible to pave the way for further recordings.

The annual membership fee of the society is \$1.00. Dues, inquiries, etc., should be sent to the Secretary, Robert G. Grey, 535 West 110th Street, New York City.

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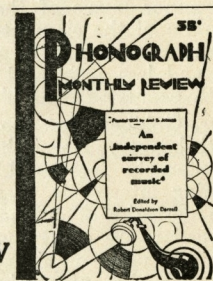
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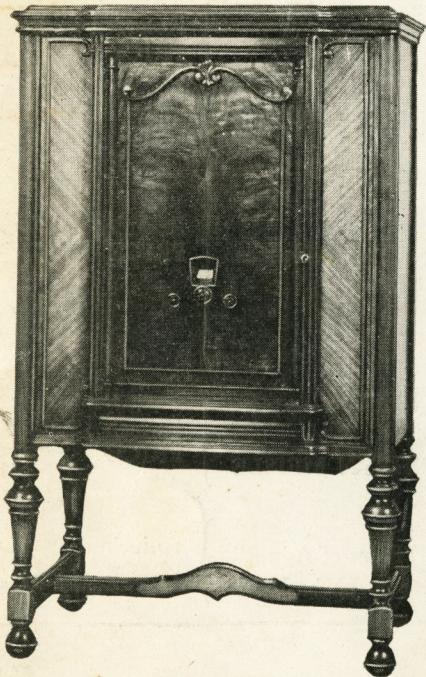
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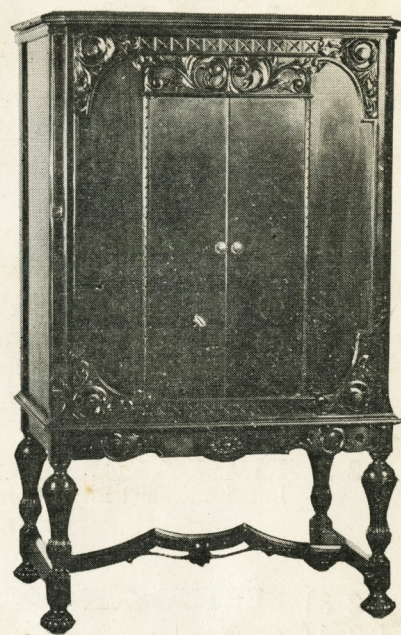
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